

Two Discourses...

John Gill

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T W O
C O U R S E S;
T H E O N E
O n P R A Y E R,
T H E O T H E R
O n S I N G I N G o f P S A L M S,

From 1 COR. xiv. 15.

In which are shewn

The Obligation to these DUTIES;
the Nature of them; and the Manner and
Usefulness of performing them.

By JOHN GILL, D.D.

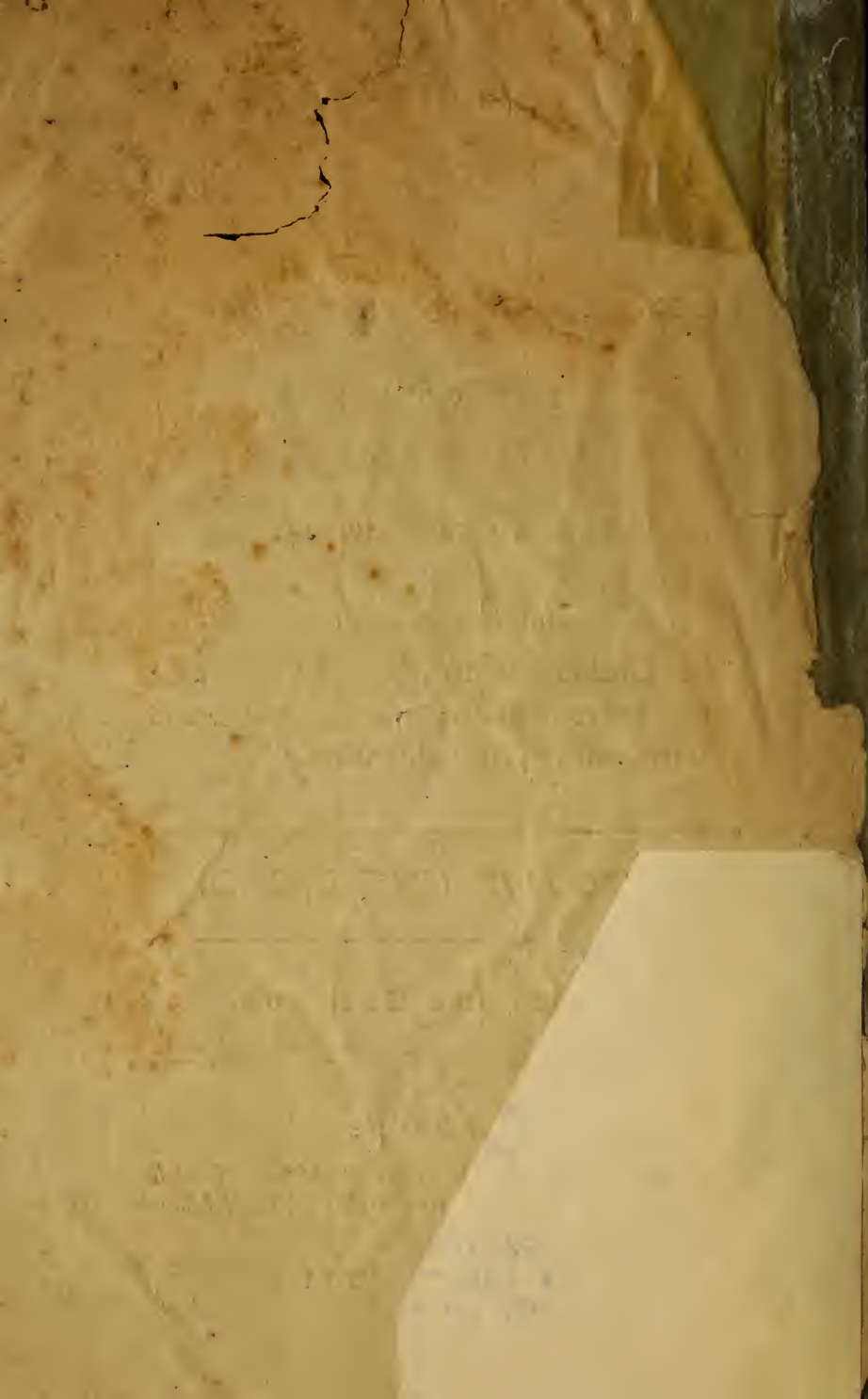
THE SECOND EDITION.

L O N D O N:

Printed and Sold by G. KEITH at *Mercer's Chapel,*
warheapside; and J. ROBINSON at *Dock-head, South-*
th. M.DCC.LI.

[Price SIX-PENCE.]





I COR. xiv. 15. former Part.

*What is it then? I will pray with the Spirit,
and will pray with the understanding also.*

THE design of this epistle is chiefly to reprove the Church at Corinth for the divisions and contentions, which were there fomented and kept up on account of their ministers; some being for Paul, some for Apollo, and others for Cephas, and to remove some irregular practices from among them, which were either openly avowed or connived at by them; such as continuing a wicked person in their communion, going to law with one another before heathen magistrates, and the disorderly attendance of many of them at the Lord's table. The apostle having finished this part of his design, does, in the twelfth chapter, largely insist on the subject of spiritual gifts; where he gives an account of the diversity of them, of their author, and of their various usefulness in the church of Christ; for which reason he exhorts the members of this church to covet them earnestly, though he would not have them depend on them, since they are not saving. In the thirteenth chapter, he prefers charity or love to them, and shews, that without this they are useless and unprofitable to those who have them. In this fourteenth chapter, he presses them to "follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather," says he, "that ye may prophesy." He proves, by many arguments, and especially by that taken from edification, that prophesying in a known language, in the mother tongue, which is understood by the people, is preferable to the gift of speaking in an

A unknown

unknown language, not understood by the people, and so unedifying to them. It is evident, that by prophesying, he means not only preaching, but praying, since he instances in it, and argues, in the words preceding my text, thus: "For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful;" h. e. when I pray in an unknown language, being under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, I make use of that extraordinary gift which he has bestowed upon me, and my own spirit is indeed refreshed by it: But what I myself conceive, understand, and express, is useless and unprofitable to others, who do not understand the language in which I pray; therefore, says he, in the words of my text, "What is it then?" What is to be done in this case? What is most prudent and adviseable? What is most eligible and desirable? Must I not pray with the Spirit at all? Shall I not make use of that extraordinary gift which the Spirit has bestowed upon me? Shall I entirely neglect it, and lay it aside? No, "I will pray with the Spirit;" I will make use of the gift I have; but then it shall be in such a way and manner, as that I shall be understood by others, "I will pray with the understanding also." In these words may be consider'd,

- I. The work and business of prayer, which the apostle resolved in the strength of Christ, and, by the assistance of his Spirit, to be found in the performance of; "I will pray, &c."
- II. The manner in which he is desirous of performing this duty; "with the Spirit, and with the understanding also."

I. I shall consider the work and business of prayer, which the apostle resolved, in the strength of Christ, and by the assistance of his Spirit, to be found in the performance of. It will not be amiss, under

this head, to enquire into the object of prayer, the several parts of it, and its different kinds. I shall begin,

I. With the object of prayer, which is not any mere creature. Prayer is a part of religious worship, which is due to God only. To address a creature in such a solemn manner is idolatry. This is a sin the Gentiles^a have been notoriously guilty of, who have paid their devoirs this way, both to animate and inanimate creatures. The idolatrous heathen is thus described by the prophet^b; “ He maketh a god his graven image; he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, deliver me, for thou art my god.” Such a practice as this, is an argument of great ignorance and stupidity; “ They have no knowledge, that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save.” ’Tis no wonder that their prayers should be in vain; since^c “ their idols are silver and gold, the work of mens hands: They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not.” They are insensible of the wants of their votaries, and unable to help them; they are not in a capacity to give them the least relief, or bestow the least temporal mercy on them: “ Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? Art not thou he, O Lord, our God? therefore we will wait upon thee; for thou hast made all these things.” The Papists have followed the Pagans in their idolatrous prayers^f to angels, the virgin Mary, and other saints departed, and even to many that were not saints; but it may

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be

^a What the Heathens pray’d to their Gods for, and what rites and ceremonies they used in prayer, see *Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dierum*, l. 4. c. 17. ^b *Isai. xlii. 17.* ^c *Ib. c. xlv. 20.*

^d *Psal. cxv. 4, 5, 6.*

^e *Jer. xiv. 22.*

^f *Vid. Roman. Breviar.*

be said to them, what Eliphaz said to Job^g, in another case; “ Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?”

God only is, and ought to be the object of prayer. “ My prayer, says David, shall be unto the God of my life^h.” God has a right to this part of worship from us, as he is the God of our lives, in whom we live, move, and have our being; who grants us life and favour, and whose visitation preserves our spirits; who daily follows us with his goodness, and loads us with his benefits; to whom we are obliged for every mercy, and on whom the whole support and continuance of our beings depend; and we are under greater obligation still, as well as have greater encouragement, to address the throne of his grace, as he is the God of all grace, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus; all which may assure us, that his eyes are upon us, his ears are open to our cries, that he has both a heart and a hand to help and relieve us; he is a God that hears and answers prayer, to whom all flesh shall come, who are sensible of their need of him, and dependance upon him; his arm is not shorten’d, that it cannot save, nor his ear heavy that it cannot hear; nor did he ever say to any of the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain.

Though the Lord our God is but one Lord; there is but one God, which, with the scriptures, we assert, in opposition to the polytheism of the Gentiles, who had gods many, and lords many; yet there is a plurality of Persons in the Deityⁱ, which are neither more nor fewer than Three, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, which Three are One; the Father is God, the Word is God,

^g Job v. 1. ^h Psal. xlii. 8. ⁱ See my Doctrine of the Trinity stated and vindicated, &c. c. 2. p. 25, &c.

God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet there are not three Gods, but one God. Though the Persons in the Godhead are more than One, yet the Godhead itself is single and undivided. Now God in either and each of the three divine Persons, may be pray'd unto. It is lawful for us to address in prayer either God the Father, or God the Son, or God the Holy Ghost distinctly, though not any of them to the exclusion of the others. This I mention, to disentangle the minds of some, who may have some scruples and hesitations about praying to the distinct Persons in the Deity. Now it is easy to observe, that there are petitions directed to each of the three Persons distinctly; of which I shall give some few instances from the scriptures.

God the Father is sometimes singly and distinctly prayed unto, though not to the exclusion of the Son or Spirit. It would be too tedious to reckon up all the instances of this kind: The epistle to the Ephesians will furnish us with a sufficient number to our purpose. In one place, the apostle says to them; ^k “ I cease not to give thanks for you, “ making mention of you in my prayers, that the “ God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of “ glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom “ and revelation in the knowledge of him;” where God the Father is prayed unto, as distinct from the Lord Jesus Christ, whose God and Father he is, and distinct from the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, who as such is prayed for. And in another place, he says, ^l “ For this cause I bow my knees unto “ the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,—that he “ would grant you, according to the riches of his “ glory, to be strengthened with might, by his “ Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell “ in your hearts by faith;” in which passage God the Father is addressed, as the object of prayer, distinct

^k Eph. i. 16, 17.^l Ib. ch. iii. 14, 16, 17.

distinct from Christ and the Spirit; the former of which he desires might dwell in their hearts by faith, and that they might be strengthen'd by the latter in their inner man. If these instances were not sufficient, others might be produced; but about God the Father's being the object of prayer, there is no question nor hesitation.

God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, may be distinctly prayed unto, of which are many instances in scripture. Sometimes he is prayed unto in conjunction with his Father, as appears from all those passages in the epistles^m, where "grace and peace" are desired from God our Father, and the Lord "Jesus Christ;" and from many others such as these: ⁿ "Now God himself, and our Father, and "our Lord Jesus, direct our way unto you; and "the Lord, *b.e.* the Lord Jesus, make you to increase and abound in love one towards another, "and towards all men, even as we do towards you;" and, in another place, ^o "Now our Lord Jesus "Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which "hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope, through grace, comfort "your hearts, and stablish you in every good word "and work." Sometimes Christ is prayed unto singly and alone; as by Stephen at the time of his death, when he prayed, saying, ^p "Lord Jesus receive my spirit:" By the apostle Paul^q, when he had "a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan "to buffet him; for this, says he, I besought the "Lord thrice, *b.e.* the Lord Jesus Christ, as appears from the context, that it might depart from "me: And he said unto me, my grace is sufficient "for thee; for my strength is made perfect in

"weak-

^m Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 3. 2 Cor. i. 2. Gal. i. 3. Eph. i. 2. Phil. i. 2. Col. i. 2. ⁿ 1 Thess. i. 1. 2 Thess. i. 2. 1 Tim. i. 2. 2 Tim. i. 2. Tit. i. 4. Philem. ver. 3. 2 John ver. 3. Rev. i. 4, 5. ^o 1 Thess. iii. 11, 12. ^p 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17. ^q Acts vii. 59. ^r 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.

“weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather
“glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ
“may rest upon me.” By the apostle John, when
Christ said to him, ^r “Surely I come quickly, he
“replies, Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus.” And
by many others; such as those mentioned by Ana-
nias to Christ, when he bid him arise, and go to
Saul; ^s “Lord, says he, I have heard by many of
“this man, how much evil he hath done to thy
“saints at Jerusalem; and here he hath authority
“from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy
“name.”

God the Holy Ghost may be also prayed unto,
as he is sometimes singly and alone, and as distinct
from the Father and the Son; ^t “The Lord di-
“rect your hearts into the love of God, and into
“the patient waiting for Christ.” By the Lord,
I understand the Lord the Spirit, whose work it is,
to direct the hearts of believers into the love of God,
and to shed it abroad in their hearts; who is mani-
festly distinguished in this petition from God the
Father, into whose love, and from the Lord Jesus
Christ, into a patient waiting for of whom, the
hearts of the saints are desired to be directed by him.
Sometimes he is prayed unto distinctly, in conjunc-
tion with the other two Persons, as by the apostle
Paul; ^u “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and
“the love of God, and the communion of the Holy
“Ghost, be with you all. Amen.” And by the
apostle John; ^w “Grace be unto you, and peace,
“from him which is, and which was, and which
“is to come; and from the seven spirits which are
“before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is
“the faithful witness.” By the seven spirits, can-
not be meant angels; for it cannot be thought that
they, being creatures, should be put upon a level
with

^r Rev. xxii. 20.^s Acts ix. 14.^t 2 Thess. iii. 5.^u 2 Cor. xiii. 14.^w Rev. i. 4, 5.

with the divine Being, and be with him address'd in such a solemn manner; but by them we are to understand the Holy Spirit of God, who is so called either in allusion to *Isai.* xi. 2. or on account of the seven churches of Asia, to whom John wrote by his dictates, or to denote the perfection and fulness of his gifts and graces.

Now though each divine Person may be singly and distinctly address'd in prayer, and all Three together being the one God, be consider'd as the object of it; yet, according to the order of the Persons in the Deity, and suitably to their several and distinct parts, which they, by agreement, take in the affair of man's salvation, God the Father, the first Person, is generally address'd as the object of prayer, though not to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit: Christ is the Mediator, by whom we draw nigh to God; and the Holy Ghost is the enditer of our prayers, and who assists in the putting of them up unto him.

The first Person is usually address'd in prayer under the character of a Father, and as our Father; so Christ taught his disciples to pray, * "Our Father which art in heaven, &c." and he is to be considered in this relation to us, either as the Father of our spirits, the Author of our beings, by whom we are provided for, supplied, and supported in them. In this manner the church in *Isaiah's* time applied to him, saying; † "But now, O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter, and we are all the work of thy hand. Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people." Or he may be considered as the Father or Author of our mercies, temporal and spiritual, which he, in a kind and gracious manner, bestows on us, through Christ, and

* *Matt.* vi. 9.

† *Isai.* lxiv. 8, 9.

and that as the Father of Christ, and as our God and Father in Christ. In this view the apostle addresses him, when he says, ^z “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.” And, in another place ^a, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” Now these several considerations furnish out so many reasons and arguments to induce and encourage us to apply to him, who is “the God of all grace,” and is both able and willing to “supply our need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

The second Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is both God and man, is the Mediator between God and man. God, absolutely considered, is a “consuming fire;” there is no approaching to him as creatures, and especially as sinful creatures. Job was sensible of this, when he said, ^b “He is not a man as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment; neither is there any days-man betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.” Now Christ is the Days-man, the Mediator, the middle Person, who has opened a way for us to God, even “a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh ^c.” He himself is “the way, the truth, and the life;” he is the way of access to God; “through him we, both Jews and Gentiles, have an access, by one Spirit, unto the Father;” he is the way of acceptance with God; our persons are “accepted in the beloved,” and our “spiritual sacrifices” of prayer and praise are “acceptable to God by Jesus Christ:” The prayers of the saints are called “odours ^d”; they are

^z 2 Cor. i. 3. ^a Eph. i. 3. ^b Job ix. 32, 33. ^c Heb. x. 20. John xiv. 6. Eph. ii. 18. and i. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 5.
^d Rev. v. 8. and viii. 3, 4.

of a sweet smelling favour to God ; which is owing to the mediation of Christ, the Angel of God's presence, who stands continually at the golden altar before the throne, with a golden censer in his hand, to whom is given much incense, with which he offers the prayers of all saints, and which makes them a sweet odour to God. Our encouragements to prayer, and to the exercise of grace in that duty, are chiefly taken from, and our pleas for the blessings of grace, are founded on the Person, blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and intercession of Christ.

“ Seeing then, says the apostle^c, that we have a
 “ great High Priest, that is passed into the hea-
 “ vens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our
 “ profession: For we have not an High Priest
 “ which cannot be touched with the feeling of our
 “ infirmities ; but was in all points tempted like as
 “ we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come
 “ boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain
 “ mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”
 And, in another place^f, he exhorts and encourages to this work in much the same manner ; “ Having,
 “ says he, an High Priest over the house of God,
 “ let us draw near with a true heart, in full assu-
 “ rance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from
 “ an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with
 “ pure water.”

The third Person, the Holy Spirit, takes his part, and has a peculiar place in this work ; he is the Author of prayer, the Enditer of it, who forms it in our hearts, creates breathings, and desires after spiritual things, stirs us up to prayer, and assists in it. Hence he is called, ^g “ The Spirit of grace and of
 “ supplications ;” both the gift and grace of prayer come from him ; he informs us of our wants, acquaints us with our necessities, teaches us, both in what manner, and for what we should pray ; for what

^c Heb. iv. 14, 15, 16. ^f Ib. ch. x. 21, 22. ^g Zech. xii. 10.

what his most suitable for us, and agreeable to the will of God to bestow on us, and helps us under all our infirmities in prayer; which is observed by the apostle, for the use, instruction, and comfort of believers, when he says^b, “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God.” As Christ is our Advocate with the Father, pleads our cause, and makes intercession at the right hand of God for the acceptation of our persons and prayers, so the Holy Spirit is our Advocate within us; he makes intercession for us in our own hearts; he puts strength into us; he fills our mouths with arguments, and enables us to plead with God. Christ is the Mediator, through whom, and the Spirit, the Assister, by whom we have access to the Father. God, as the God of all grace, kindly invites us to himself; Christ, the Mediator, gives us boldness; and the Spirit of grace, freedom and liberty in our access unto him; and this is what the scriptures callⁱ “praying with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and praying in the Holy Ghost.” But of this more hereafter. I proceed,

2. To consider the several parts of prayer; in which I do not design to prescribe any precise form of praying, but to observe to you the method and matter of it, which may serve to direct and assist you in it. It is proper to begin this work with a celebration and adoration of some one or more of the divine perfections; which will at once have a tendency to strike our minds with a proper sense of the divine Majesty, glorify him, and encourage us in

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our

^b Rom. viii. 26, 27.ⁱ Eph. vi. 18. Jude, ver. 20.

our supplications to him; all which is highly necessary in our entrance on it. All the perfections of God are instructive to us in this work, and serve to influence our minds and affections towards him, command our fear and reverence of him, engage our faith in him, strengthen our dependance on him, and raise in us expectations of receiving good things from him. The greatness, glory, power, and majesty of God, the holiness, purity, and righteousness of his nature, oblige us to an humble submission to him, and reverential awe of him. The consideration of his love, grace, mercy, and goodness, will not suffer his dread to make us afraid. We learn from his omniscience, that he knows not only our persons, but our wants, and what is most suitable for us, when the most convenient season, and which the best way and manner to bestow it on us. It can be no small satisfaction to us, "that all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do;" the thoughts of our hearts are not hid from him; the secret ejaculations of our minds are known to him; the breathings and desires of our souls are before him; he understands the language of a sigh and groan; and when we chatter like a crane or a swallow, it does not pass unobserved by him. His omnipotence assures us that nothing is too hard for him, or impossible to him; that he is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think;" that we can't be in such a low estate, or distressed condition, or attended with such streights and difficulties; but he is able to relieve, deliver, and save us. We conclude from his omnipresence, that he fills the heavens and the earth; that he is in all places, at all times; that he is a God at hand, and a God afar off; that he is near unto us, where-ever we are, ready to assist us, and will be "a very present help in trouble." His immutability in his counsel, and faithfulness in his covenant, yield

yield the “ heirs of promise strong consolation.” These give us reason to believe that not one of the good things which the Lord has promised shall ever fail; that what he has said, he will do; and what he has either purposed or promised, he will bring to pass: “ He will not suffer his faithfulness to fail; “ his covenant he will not break, nor alter the thing “ that is gone out of his lips.” You see that the notice of these things is necessary, both for the glory of God and our own comfort. It is also very proper, when we begin our address to God, to make mention of some one or more of his names and titles, as Jehovah, Lord, God, &c. and of the relations he stands in to us; not only as the God of nature, the Author of our beings, the Donor of our mercies, and the Preserver of our lives, but as the God of grace, the Father of Christ, and our Covenant-God, and Father in Christ. After this manner our Lord directed his disciples to pray, saying, “ Our “ Father which art in heaven, &c.”

In the next place, it highly becomes us to acknowledge our meanness and unworthiness, to make confession of our sins and transgressions, and pray for the fresh discoveries and manifestations of pardoning love and grace. When we enter into the divine presence, and take upon us to speak unto the Lord, we should own with Abraham^k, that we are “ but dust and ashes;” and with Jacob^l, that we are “ not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and “ of all the truth which God has shewed unto us.” Confession of sin, both of our nature and of our lives, is a very proper and necessary part of this work. This has been the practice of the saints in all ages; as of *David*, which appears from his own words^m; “ I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and “ mine iniquity have I not hid: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou “ for-

^k Gen. xviii. 27. ^l Chap. xxxii. 10. ^m Psal xxxii. 5.

“forgavest the iniquity of my sin.” So Daniel, when he set his face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, made confession both of his own and of the sins of others; “I prayed unto the Lord my God, says heⁿ, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant, and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments. We have sinned and committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments; neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.” And the apostle John, for the encouragement of believers in this part of the duty of prayer, says • “If we confess our sins, he, *b. e.* God, is just and faithful to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness:” Not that confession of sin is either the procuring cause, or means, or condition of pardon, and cleansing, which are both owing to the blood of Christ; in justice and faithfulness to which, and him that shed it, God forgives the sins of his people, and cleanses them from them; but the design of the apostle is to shew that sin is in the saints, and is committed by them, and that confession of sin is right and acceptable in the sight of God; and, to animate and encourage them to it, he takes notice of the justice and faithfulness of God in pardoning and cleansing his people, through the blood of Christ, which, as he had a little before observed, “cleanseth from all sin.” Nay, we are not only to make confession of sin in prayer, but to pray for the pardon and forgiveness of it. Christ directed his disciples to this part of their duty, when he bid them pray after this manner^p; “Forgive us our debts,

ⁿ Dan. ix. 4, 5, 6.

• 1 John i. 9.

^p Matt. vi. 12.

“ debts, as we forgive our debtors.” This has been the constant practice of the saints, as of Moses^a;
 “ O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go amongst us, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.” Of David^b;
 “ For thy name’s sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.” Yea, he says^c to the Lord,
 “ For this, shall every one that is godly pray unto thee, in a time when thou mayest be found.” And of Daniel^d, “ O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do, defer not, for thine own sake, O my God; for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.” Now it ought to be observed, that very frequently when the saints pray, either for the forgiveness of their own, or others sins, their meaning is, that God would, in a providential way, deliver them out of present distress, remove his afflicting hand, which lies heavy on them, or avert such judgments which seem to hang over their heads, and very much threaten them; which, when he does, is an indication of his having pardoned them. We are to understand many petitions of Moses^e, Job^f, Solomon^g, and others, in this sense: Besides, when believers now pray for the pardon of sin, their meaning is not that the blood of Christ should be shed again for the remission of their sins; or that any new act of pardon should arise in God’s mind, and be passed by him; but that they might have the sense, the manifestation, and application of pardoning grace to their souls. We are not to imagine, that as often as the saints sin, repent, confess their sins, and pray for the forgiveness of them, that God makes and passes new acts of pardon; for he has, by one eternal and compleat act of grace, in the view of his Son’s blood and sacrifice, freely and fully forgiven all the trespasses of

^a Exod. xxxiv. 9. ^b Psal. xxv. 11. ^c Psal. xxxii. 6.

^d Dan. ix. 19. ^e Exod. xxxii. 32. Numb. xiv. 19, 20.

^f Job. vii. 21, ^g 1 Kings viii. 30, 34, 36, 39, 50.

of his chosen ones, all their sins past, present, and to come; but whereas they daily sin against God, grieve his Spirit, and wound their own consciences, they have need of the fresh sprinklings of the blood of Jesus, and of renewed manifestations of pardon to their souls; and it is both their duty and interest to attend the throne of grace on this account.

Another part and branch of prayer lies in putting up petitions to God for good things, temporal and spiritual mercies, the blessings of nature and of grace. As we ought to live in a dependance on divine providence, so we should daily pray for the common sustenance of our bodies, the comfort, support, and preservation of our lives; as our Lord has taught us, saying^y, “ Give us this day our daily bread.” Our requests in this way ought, indeed, to be frequent, but not large; we should not seek great things for ourselves. Agur’s prayer^z is a proper copy for us to follow; “ Two things, says he to “ the Lord, have I required of thee, deny me “ them not before I die; remove far from me “ vanity and lies: Give me neither poverty nor “ riches; feed me with food convenient for me, “ lest I be full and deny thee, and say, who is the “ Lord? or lest I be poor and steal, and take the “ name of my God in vain.” The spiritual blessings we should ask for, are such as God has laid up in the covenant of grace, which is ordered in all things, and sure, Christ has procured by his blood, the gospel is a revelation of, and the Spirit of God makes intercession for in our own hearts, according to the will of God; for these things we should “ pray “ in faith, nothing wavering”; for this is the confidence that we have in him, *b. e.* God, that if “ we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth “ us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever “ we

^y Matth. vi. 11.

^z Prov. xxx. 7, 8, 9.

^a James i. 6.

¹ John v. 14, 15.

“ we ask, we know that we have the petitions that
 “ we desired of him.” When we pray for special
 mercies, spiritual blessings, such as converting grace
 for unconverted friends and relations, we ought to
 pray in submission to the secret will of God.

Thanksgiving for mercies received, is another
 thing which we should not be forgetful of at the
 throne of grace; “ In every thing, by prayer and
 “ supplication, with thanksgiving, says the apostle^b,
 “ let your requests be made known to God.” As
 we have always mercies to pray for, so likewise to
 return thanks for; it becomes us to “ continue in
 “ prayer^c,” for constant supplies from heaven, and
 to “ watch in the same with thanksgiving,” *b. e.* to
 wait for the blessings we have been praying for;
 and when we have received them, to watch for a
 proper opportunity, and make use of it, to “ offer
 “ the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of
 “ our lips, giving thanks to his name.” When this
 part is neglected, it is highly reſented by the Lord;
 as appears from the case of the ten lepers^d, when
 “ one of them saw that he was healed, turned back,
 “ and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell
 “ down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks :
 “ And he was a Samaritan; upon which our Lord
 “ says, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are
 “ the nine? there are not found that returned to
 “ give glory to God, save this stranger.”

Before we conclude the exercise of this duty, it is
 proper to deprecate such evils from us, which are
 either upon us, or we know we are liable to, or may
 befall us; such as the temptations of Satan, the snares
 of the world, the distresses of life, public calamities,
 &c. This was in part practised by Daniel: “ O
 “ Lord, says he^e, according to all thy righteous-
 “ nefs,

^b Phil. iv. 6. ^c Col. iv. 2. ^d Luke xvii. 15, 16, 17, 18.

^e Dan. ix. 16.

“ nefs, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury
 “ be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy
 “ mountain; because for our sins, and for the ini-
 “ quities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people
 “ are become a reproach to all that are about us.”
 And this is intimated by Christ to his disciples, in
 that excellent directory of prayer he gave them, part
 of which was this; ^f “ Lead us not into tempta-
 “ tion, but deliver us from evil.”

At the close of this work of prayer, it is necessary
 to make use of doxologies, or ascriptions of glory
 to God; as we begin with God, we should end with
 him; as in the entrance on this duty, we ascribe
 greatness to him, so at the conclusion of it we should
 ascribe glory to him. Such an ascription of glory
 to God, we find, was used by Christ at the end of
 the prayer he taught his disciples, in this manner;
^g “ Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the
 “ glory.” By the apostle Paul ^h in this form;
 “ Unto him, *b. e.* God, be glory in the church, by
 “ Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without
 “ end.” And in another place thus ⁱ; “ Now unto
 “ the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only
 “ wise God, be honour and glory, for ever and
 “ ever.” By the apostle Jude in these words ^k;
 “ Now unto him that is able to keep you from
 “ falling, and to present you faultless before the
 “ presence of his glory, with exceeding joy; to the
 “ only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty,
 “ dominion and power, both now and ever.” And
 by the apostle John after this manner ^l; “ Unto
 “ him that hath loved us, and washed us from our
 “ sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and
 “ priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory
 “ and dominion for ever and ever.” These, and
 such like ascriptions of glory to God, Father, Son,
 and

^f Matt. vi. 13. ^g Ibid. ^h Eph. iii. 21. ⁱ 1 Tim.
 i. 17. ^k Jude, ver. 24, 25. ^l Rev. i. 5, 6.

and Spirit, are necessary at the finishing of our supplications, since the mercies and blessings we have been either petitioning, or returning thanks for, come from him; besides, they serve to shew forth the praises of God, and to express our sense of gratitude to him, our dependance upon him, and our expectation of receiving good things from him.

The whole of this exercise of prayer should be concluded with pronouncing the word Amen; as a testification of our hearty assent to what we have expressed, and of our sincere desires and wishes, that what we have been praying for might be accomplished, and of our full and firm persuasion and assured belief that God is able, willing, and faithful to perform all that he has promised, and give whatsoever we have been asking of him, according to his will. But I proceed,

3. To consider the several sorts and kinds of prayer, or the various distributions into which it may be made, or the different views in which it may be considered,

Prayer may be considered either as mental or vocal. Mental prayer is what is only conceived in the mind; it consists of secret ejaculations in the heart, which are not expressed with an audible and articulate voice. Such was the prayer of Hannah, of whom it is said ^m; that “as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah she spake in her heart, only her lips moved; but her voice was not heard, therefore Eli thought she had been drunken.” Vocal prayer is that which, being conceived and formed in the heart, is expressed by the tongue, in words, with an audible and articulate voice, so as to be heard and understood. This the prophet intends, when he says ⁿ; “Take with you words, and turn unto the Lord, say unto him, Take away all iniquity,

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^m 1 Sam. i. 12, 13.

ⁿ Hos. xiv. 2.

“quity, and receive us graciously; so will we render the calves of our lips.”

Again, prayer may be considered either as private or public. Private prayer is that which is either performed in the family, by the head or master of it, the rest joining with him in it, or by a society of Christians in a private house, or by a single person, in secret and alone; concerning which Christ gives these directions and instructions^o: “When thou prayest, says he, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men; verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father, which is in secret, and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.” Public prayer is what is used in the house of God, which is therefore called¹, an “house of prayer;” where the people of God meet together, and, with the other parts of divine, public, and social worship, perform this. The first Christians, in the early days of the gospel, are commended, among other things, for their “continuing stedfastly in prayers,” *b. e.* in public prayers²; they constantly met where “prayer was wont to be made;” and God was pleased to give a signal testimony of his approbation of this their practice; for, at a certain time, “when they had prayed, the place was shaken, where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.”

Once more: Prayer may be considered either as extraordinary or ordinary. Extraordinary prayer is that which is made use of on particular and special occasions.

^o Matt. vi. 5, 6.
¹ 1b. ch. iv. 31.

² Isai. lvi. 7.

³ Acts ii. 42.

occasions; as that exercise of prayer, which was kept by the church on account of Peter's being in prison. The divine historian says*, that "Peter was kept in prison; but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him;" which instance of extraordinary prayer was followed with an extraordinary event; for whilst they were praying, an angel was dispatched from heaven, and loosed Peter from his bonds, who came to the place where the church was assembled, before they had broke up their exercise. Such also were the prayers of the elders of the church in those times for the sick, which the apostle James speaks of†; "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." Ordinary prayer is what is used in common in the church of God, in a religious family, or by a single person, at stated times; which, with David and Daniel under the Old Testament, were three times a day‡, evening, morning, and at noon; which practice is laudable enough to follow, provided no stress is laid on the punctual performance of this duty at these precise times, and is not made the term and condition of our acceptance with God, and of our standing in his favour, which would be to reduce us to the covenant of works, ensnare our souls, and bring us into a state of bondage.

II. I come now to consider the manner in which the apostle was desirous of performing this duty.

1. "With the Spirit." By the Spirit^w, some understand no more than the human breath, or voice; and suppose that the apostle's meaning is, that

* Acts xii. 5.

† James v. 14, 15.

‡ Psal. lv. 17.

Dan. vi. 10.

^w Primasius, Gaignaeus & Erasmus in *Epist.*, in v. 14. Vid. Beza & Paraeus in *ib.*

that he would pray vocally, with an articulate voice, with distinct sounds, so as to be understood : Perhaps some passages in this chapter, which may seem to favour this sense, might incline them to it ; as when the apostle observes^x, that “ things without
 “ life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except
 “ they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall
 “ it be known what is piped or harped ? For if the
 “ trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall pre-
 “ pare himself to the battle ? So likewise you, ex-
 “ cept ye utter by the tongue words easy to be un-
 “ derstood, how shall it be known what is spoken ?
 “ for ye shall speak into the air. There are, it may
 “ be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and
 “ none of them are without signification ; therefore
 “ if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be
 “ unto him that speaketh a Barbarian ; and he that
 “ speaketh, a Barbarian unto me.” But the apostle here, by voice and distinction in sounds, does not intend a clear, distinct, articulate voice, but the mother-tongue, a known language, in opposition to an unknown tongue and foreign language, not understood by the people. This sense of the words is mean, low, and trifling, as well as forced and strained.

By “ the Spirit,” rather is meant the extraordinary gift of the Spirit bestowed on the apostle and others, by which they spoke with divers tongues, and which he determined to make use of, though in such a manner, as to be understood : He would not use it without an interpretation. This is the sense I have given of it already, and is the most generally received sense of interpreters, and which may be confirmed by the use of the word in the context, as in *ver.* 2. “ He that speaketh in an unknown
 “ tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God,
 “ for no man understandeth him ; howbeit, in the
 “ Spirit,”

^x Verses 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

“ Spirit,” *b. e.* by exercising the extraordinary gift of the Spirit, “ he speaketh mysteries ;” and in *ver.* 14. “ If I pray in an unknown tongue, my Spirit prayeth,” *b. e.* I pray by virtue of the extraordinary gift of the Spirit bestowed on me ; but “ my understanding is unfruitful ;” I am of no use and service to those that hear me. So likewise in *ver.* 16. “ Else when thou shalt bleis with the Spirit,” *b. e.* when thou givest thanks in an unknown tongue, through the gift of the Spirit, “ how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned, say, Amen, at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest ?”

There is another sense of the phrase, which I am unwilling to omit, and that is this : By “ praying with the Spirit,” some understand the apostle’s own spirit, or his praying in a spiritual way, with a spirit of devotion and fervency ; and, indeed, in such a manner he performed every part of religious worship and service, whether preaching or praying, or any thing else : “ God is my witness, says he^r, whom I serve with my spirit, in the gospel of his Son ;” which kind of service is most agreeable to the nature of God^z : He is “ a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit, and in truth.” And it becomes us to be fervent in spirit, whilst we are serving the Lord. Such a frame of soul, particularly in prayer, is most suitable to the work, most desirable to the saints, acceptable to God, and powerful with him ; ^a “ The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much.”

We may be said to pray with our spirits, or in a spiritual way, when we draw nigh to God with a true heart ; or when we are enabled to lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens ; people may draw near to him, as the Jews of old did^b, with their mouth, and with their lips, honour him,

^r Rom. i. 9. ^z John iv. 24. ^a James v. 16. ^b Isa. xxix. 13.

him, and yet, at the same time, their heart may be removed far from him, and their fear towards him, be taught by the precept of men. It is one thing to have the gift of prayer, and another to have the grace of prayer, and that in exercise; it is one thing to pray with the mouth, and another to pray with the heart. Praying in a formal, graceless manner, is mere outside worship, lip-labour, bodily exercise, that profiteth nothing; it is useless to men, and unacceptable to God, who accounts of it, and calls it no other than howling. Hence he says of some,
 “ They have not cried unto me with their hearts,
 “ when they howled upon their beds.” Spiritual fervent prayer is, more or less, performed in the exercise of the grace of faith; such who draw nigh to God with a true heart, should also in full assurance of faith. The apostle James directs to prayer in this way^d; “ If any of you, says he, lack wisdom, let
 “ him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally,
 “ and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him:
 “ But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for
 “ he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven
 “ with the wind, and tossed; for let not that man
 “ think, that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.” We should not only have an assurance of faith, with respect to the object whom we address, which is absolutely necessary; * “ For he that cometh to God,
 “ must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder
 “ of them that diligently seek him;” but also with respect to the things we pray for, when they are such which God has promised, which he has laid up in his covenant, put into the hands of his Son, and, we know, are according to his revealed mind and will to give; all which is consistent with that reverence and godly fear, by which we serve God acceptably; with that humility which becomes supplicants, and is grateful to God, who “ resisteth the
 “ proud,

^c Hos. vii. 14.

^d James i. 5, 6, 7.

^e Heb. xi. 6.

“proud, but giveth grace to the humble;” and with that submission and resignation of our wills to his will, in which Christ is a glorious pattern to us, when he in prayer said ^f, “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.” In a word, when we pray with our spirits, or in a spiritual way, we not only lift up our hearts to God, and what we ask for, ask in faith, with a reverential filial fear of the divine Majesty, in deep humility of soul, and with an entire submission to God’s will; but also in the name and for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ; we do not present our supplications to God for our righteousnesses, but for the Lord’s sake, and for his great mercies; we come not in our own name, but in Christ’s; we go forth not in our own strength, but in his; we make mention of his righteousness, and of his only; we plead the merits and efficacy of his blood; we bring his sacrifice in the arms of our faith; we expect audience and acceptance upon his account alone, and that our petitions and requests will be heard and answer’d for his sake; and we leave them with him, who is our Advocate with the Father. This may be called true, spiritual, fervent, and effectual prayer.

Prayer cannot be performed in such a manner, without the grace, influence, and assistance of the Spirit of God. Some therefore think, that by “the Spirit,” in my text, is meant the Holy Spirit of God; and that praying with the Spirit, is the same which the apostle Jude calls “praying in the Holy Ghost.” If we take the words in this sense, we are not to suppose that when the apostle says, “I will pray with the Spirit,” that he imagined he could pray with the Holy Spirit, and under his influences when he pleased; his words must be considered

^f Luke xxii. 42.

sidered only as expressive of the sense he had of the need of the Spirit of God in prayer, and of his earnest desires, after his gracious assistance in the performance of it. I have already observed what place the Holy Ghost has in the work of prayer; he is the Author of it; he is the Spirit of grace and supplications; the Enditer of it, he forms it in the heart; ^a the effectual fervent, ἐνεργημένη, the inspired, the inwrought prayer of a righteous man avail-eth much; that is, such prayer as is formed in the soul by the powerful energy of the Spirit of God, who puts things into the heart, and words into the mouth: ^b “Take with you words, and turn to the Lord; say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously:” He directs in the matter of prayer; ^c “for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God.” And, indeed, who so proper as he, who searches the deep things of God, and perfectly knows his mind? he helps the saints under all their infirmities: When they are shut up in their souls, and cannot come forth in prayer with liberty, he enlarges their hearts, and gives them freedom of soul, and liberty of speech, so as they can pour out their souls before God, and tell him all their mind: ^d “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” Without him we cannot pray, either in faith or with fervency; nor can we call God our Father without him, the Spirit of adoption, or use that freedom with him, as children with a Father; but “because ye are sons, says the apostle ^e, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” Perhaps it may be objected, that if the Spirit of God is so absolutely necessary in prayer, then men ought not to pray, unless they have the Spirit, or are under

^a James v. 16.
^b 2 Cor. iii. 17.

^c Hos. xiv. 2.
^d Gal. iv. 6.

^e Rom. viii. 26, 27.

under the immediate influences of his grace. To which I answer, that prayer may be consider'd as a natural duty; and as such is binding on all men, even on a natural man, destitute of the Spirit, and ought to be, and may be, performed by him in a natural way; to which there is something analogous in the brute creatures, whose eyes wait upon the Lord; "And he giveth to the beast his food, and unto the young ravens which cry^m." And we may observe, that the apostle Peter put Simon Magus upon prayer, though he was in a state of unregeneracy; "Repent, says heⁿ, of this thy wickedness; and pray God, if perhaps, the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." 'Tis true, none but a spiritual man can pray in a spiritual manner; but then the spiritual man is not always under the gracious and powerful influences of the Spirit of God: He is sometimes destitute of them, which seems to be David's case, when he said, "Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me: Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit;" and yet we are to "pray without ceasing, to pray always and not faint^p." And one thing we are to pray for is the Spirit, to influence and assist us in prayer, and to work in us whatever is well pleasing in the sight of God: And we have reason to believe that such a petition will be heard and answer'd; for if earthly fathers "know how to give good gifts unto their children, how much more shall our heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him^q?" And, indeed, when we are in darkness and distress, without the light of God's countenance, the influences of his Spirit, and the communications of his grace, we have need of prayer

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most

^m Psal. cxlv. 15. and cxlvii. 9. ⁿ Acts viii. 22. ^o Psal. l. 11, 12. ^p 1 Theff. v. 17. ^q Luke xi. 13.

most, and ought to be most constant at “ the throne
 “ of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find
 “ grace to help in time of need.” This was David’s
 practice; “ Out of the depths, says he, have I
 “ cried unto thee, O Lord;” and so it was Jonah’s,
 when he was in “ the belly of hell, and said, I am
 “ cast out of thy sight; yet, says he, I will look
 “ again towards thy holy temple :” And he adds,
 “ When my soul fainted within me, I remember’d
 “ the Lord; and my prayer came in unto thee, into
 “ thine holy temple.” And so it was the practice
 of the church in Asaph’s time; who, under dark-
 ness and distress, said, “ Turn us again, O God,
 “ and cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.
 “ O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou be an-
 “ gry against the prayer of thy people?” But I
 proceed,

2. To observe that the apostle is desirous of per-
 forming this duty of prayer, “ with the understand-
 “ ing also,” *b. e.* in a language that may be under-
 stood by others; for, as he observes in *ver.* 9. “ ex-
 “ cept ye utter by the tongue words easy to be un-
 “ derstood, how shall it be known what is spoken?”
 And for his own part, he declares, in *ver.* 19. that
 he “ had rather speak five words in the church with
 “ his understanding, that by his voice he might
 “ teach others also, than ten thousand words in an
 “ unknown tongue.” This condemns the practice
 of the Papists, who pray in a language not under-
 stood by the people.

Or to “ pray with the understanding,” is to pray
 with the understanding illuminated by the Spirit of
 God, or to pray with an experimental spiritual un-
 derstanding of things. A man may use many words
 in prayer, and put up a great many petitions, and
 yet have no favourable experience, or spiritual under-
 standing of the things he prays for. The under-
 standing

standing of man is naturally dark, as to divine and spiritual things. The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, who enlightens the eyes of our understanding, to see our lost state and condition by nature, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the impurity of our hearts, the imperfection of our obedience, the insufficiency of our righteousness, the need of Christ, and salvation by him, and the aboundings of God's grace and mercy streaming through the Mediator's Person. Such who are thus enlighten'd, are able to "pray with the understanding also." They know who they pray unto, whilst others worship they know not what; they can come to God as their God and Father, as the God of all grace and mercy; they know the way of access to him, and are sensible of their need of the Spirit to influence and assist them, by whom they know what to pray for, as they ought, and are well assured of the readiness of God to hear and answer them for Christ's sake: And, says the apostle, "If we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." These are the persons who pray with the Spirit, and with the understanding also; these find their account in this work, and it is a delight to them.

I shall conclude this discourse with a few words, by way of encouragement to this part of divine worship. It is good for the saints to draw near to God; it is not only good because it is their duty, but because it yields their souls a spiritual pleasure; and it is also of great profit and advantage to them: It is often an ordinance of God, and which he owns for the quickening the graces of his Spirit, for the restraining and subduing the corruptions of our hearts, and for the bringing of our souls into nearer communion and fellowship with himself. Satan has
often

often felt the force and power of this piece of our spiritual armour; and, 'tis indeed, the last which the believer is directed to make use of. Praying souls are profitable in families, neighbourhoods, churches, and common-wealths, when prayerless ones are in a great measure uselefs. The believer has the utmost encouragement to this work he can desire; he may come to God, not as on a seat of justice, but as on a throne of grace. Christ is the Mediator between God and him, his way of access to God, and his Advocate with the Father; the Spirit is his Guide, Director, and Assister; he has many exceeding great and precious promises to plead with God; nor need he doubt of a kind reception, a gracious audience, and a proper answer, though never so mean and unworthy in himself; since the Lord "will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise his prayer."



I COR. xiv. 15. latter Part.

I will sing with the Spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

ON this day, in the last year, you were pleased to call me to preach to you from the former part of this verse; which led me to discourse concerning the work and duty of prayer, which, at your request, was published to the world; and now, at your fresh instances, I am desired to insist upon the latter part of it, which regards the duty of singing; and, since the text and context were open'd so far as was necessary, in my former discourse, I shall immediately attend to the consideration of the subject before me; which I shall handle in the following method:

- I. I shall endeavour to shew you what is singing, and the nature of it, as an ordinance of God.
- II. Prove that it is an ordinance not confined to the Old Testament-dispensation.
- III. Enquire into the subject-matter of singing, or what that is which is to be sung.
- IV. Point out to you the persons who are to sing.
And,
- V. Observe the manner in which this ordinance should be perform'd.

I. I am to shew you what is singing, or what is the common idea we have, or can have of it. Singing may be consider'd either in a proper, or in an improper sense; when it is used improperly, it is ascribed to inanimate creatures: So the heavens, the earth^a, mountains, forests, the trees of the wood, the pastures

^a Isa. xlv. 23. and xlix, 13. 1 Chron. xvi. 33. Psal. lxxv. 13.

pastures clothed with flocks, and the vallies covered with corn, are said to sing and shout for joy, or are exhorted to it : And it is also in this improper sense that the heart is said to sing ; as when Job says ^b, “ I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy ;” that is, greatly to rejoice ; singing for joy being put there for great joy, which is the cause of it. Singing, taken in a strict and proper sense, and as a natural act, is an act of the tongue, or voice ; though not every action of the tongue, or sound of the voice, is to be called singing. Speech is an action of the tongue ; but all kind of speaking, or saying, is not singing. Singing is speaking musically, or with the modulation of the voice : These two sounds, speaking, or saying, and singing, have not the same idea. When I am told, as it is commonly expressed, that such an one said grace before and after meat, I readily understand, that he asked a blessing of God upon his food before eating, and returned thanks for it afterwards, according to the common use of speech in prayer to God, and in conversation with men : But if it should be told me, that he sung grace before or after meat, I should not be able to form any other idea of it in my mind, but that he expressed all this in a tonical, musical way, with a modulation of the voice. Likewise it is not any clamour of the tongue, or every sound of the voice, that is to be accounted singing, but an harmonious, melodious and musical sound of it ; otherwise, why should the tuneful and warbling notes and strains of birds be called singing, any more than the grunting of a hog, the braying of an ass, the neighing of a horse, the barking of a dog, or the roaring of a lion ?

Let us now consider this action of the tongue, or voice, as perform’d religiously, and we shall find, that singing of God’s praise is speaking out his praise musically ; or it is an expression of it, with the modulation

^b Job xxix. 13.

dulation of the voice ; and so is an ordinance distinct from prayer, praise, giving of thanks, and inward spiritual joy.

It is distinct from prayer, as is evident from my text ; otherwise the apostle must be guilty of a most wretched tautology ; which is by no means to be admitted of. The apostle James mentions prayer, and singing of psalms, as two distinct things ; to which he advises different persons, or persons under different circumstances, when he says ^c, “ Is any among you afflicted ? let him pray. Is any merry ? let him sing psalms.” Nor ought it to be objected to us, that we sometimes sing petitions, or what is prayer-wise, since praying, or making petitions, is different from singing them : However, those who are of a different mind from us about singing, should not object this, since the only way of singing, or at least, the most principal one, they pretend to make use of, is in prayer, and that is praising God in prayer. But,

Singing of God’s praise is distinct from praising him ; though we do praise him in singing, yet all praising of God is not singing ; singing is one way in which we praise God ; but there are many ways in which we praise him, when we cannot be said to sing : As for instance, we praise God when we give thanks unto him for mercies spiritual or temporal ; when we speak well of his adorable perfections and glorious works, either in publick or private ; and we are capable of praising him by our lives and actions, as well as by our tongues ; in neither of which senses can we be said to sing. If all praising is singing, I should be glad to know what singing of praise is. For

That it is different from giving of thanks, appears from the institution of the Lord’s supper ; in which,
giving

^c James v. 13.

giving of thanks, and singing an hymn, or psalm, as in the margin of your bibles, or a song of praise to God, are mentioned as very distinct things; but of this more hereafter: I shall now only just observe, that the apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians^d, when he exhorts them to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, afterwards mentions giving of thanks to God in the name of Christ, as another duty incumbent on them.

Nor is inward spiritual joy, or heart-rejoicing, singing of God's praise. True spiritual joy is wrought in the soul by the Holy Ghost, and takes its rise from views of the person, blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and atonement of Christ; and is increased by the shedding abroad of the love of God in the heart, and by discoveries of covenant-interest in the Father and in the Son. Now when the soul is in such a comfortable situation, 'tis in the most agreeable frame to sing the praises of God; hence says James, "is any merry?" *ἐνθυμεῖ τις*, is any of a good mind, or in a good frame of soul? "let him sing psalms:" Not that these are the only persons that are to sing psalms, or this the only time, any more than that afflicted persons are the only ones that are to pray, and the time of affliction the only time of prayer: But as affliction more especially calls for prayer, so spiritual joy and rejoicing, for singing of psalms; but then this spiritual joy is not singing, but the cause or reason of it, and what eminently fits a person for it.

Though there is such a thing as mental prayer, there is no such thing as mental singing, or singing in the heart without the voice; speaking or preaching without a tongue, or voice, are not greater contradictions, or rather impossibilities, than singing without a tongue or voice is; such an hypothesis is suited for no scheme but Quakerism: And we may as well have our silent meetings, dumb preaching, and

^d Chap. v. 19, 20.

and mute prayer, as silent singing. Singing and making melody in the heart, is no other than singing with or from the heart, or heartily^e; or, as it is expressed in a parallel place, with grace in the heart; *i. e.* either with gratitude and thankfulness, or with grace in exercise, together with the voice.

Singing of God's praises is a vocal action, and should be performed in a social way, in concert with others; "with the voice together shall they sing^f;" and not only with the voice, but with the modulation of it: It is not any noise of the tongue or voice, but an harmonious, melodious, joyful one. ^g "O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation: Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms." But,

II. I shall endeavour to prove, that this ordinance of singing does not belong to the ceremonial law, or was confined to the Old Testament-dispensation; but is a part of natural religion, and moral worship, perpetually binding on all mankind; and so to be performed by believers in a spiritual and evangelic manner, under the gospel-dispensation. And,

1. It will appear, from the practice of the Heathens, that it was a part of natural and moral worship; who, though greatly in the dark, both about the object and manner of worship, yet, by the dim light of nature, groped after the knowledge of both, if haply they might find them; and as by this dim light they were directed to pray to a superior Being when in distress, as Jonah's mariners did; so, by the same light, they were directed to sing praises to him when they received mercies; prayer and singing being alike parts of natural religion and moral worship. So that though the Gentiles had no positive laws nor

E 2

scheme

^e Nusquam enim legimus aliquem sine voce cantasse. Unde necesse est hic, in corde, ex corde intelligi: Scilicet ut non solum ore, sed etiam corde cantemus. *Hieronym.* in Col. 3, 16.

^f Isa. lii. 8.

^g Psal. xcvi. 1, 2.

scheme of revelation to guide them in the worship of God, yet, in some instances, did, “ by nature, the
 “ things contained in the law; which shew the work
 “ of the law written on their hearts.” I will just produce some few instances respecting the present case. Clemens Alexandrinus intimates, that one part of the religious worship of the Egyptians, consisted of hymns to their gods; his words are these; “ First a finger goes before, bringing forth some one
 “ thing of the symbols of music; and they say, that
 “ he ought to take two books out of those of Hermes, the one containing the hymns of the gods,
 “ the other, the method of a royal life.” And a little after, he adds; “ There are ten things which are
 “ suitable to the honour of their gods, and contain
 “ the Egyptian religion, as sacrifices, first fruits,
 “ hymns, prayers, shews, feasts, and such like things^h.” This is confirmed by Porphyry, who says, that the Egyptians devote “ the day to the worship of their
 “ gods; in which, three or four times, viz. morn-
 “ ing and evening, noon and sun-setting, they sing
 “ hymns unto themⁱ.” The same Porphyry says, concerning the Indians, that “ they spend
 “ the greatest part of the day and night in prayers
 “ and hymns to the gods^k.” And moreover, that
 “ when they commit their bodies to the flames, that
 “ they may, in the purest manner, separate the soul
 “ from

^h Πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ προέρχεται ὁ ὡδὸς ἐν τῇ τῶν τῆς μουσικῆς ἐπιφερόμεν^θ συμβόλων· τῶν τούτων φασὶ δύο βιβλίας ἀναισθεῖναι δεῖν ἐκ τῶν Ἑρμεῶν. Ὁν δ᾽ ἄλλοτερον μὲν, ὅπως περιέχει Θεῶν, ἐκλογισμὸν δὲ βασιλικῶν β.ε τὸ δεύτερον. Paulo post, δέκα δὲ εἰσι τὰ εἰς τὴν τιμὴν ἀνέκοντα τῶν παρ’ αὐλοῖς Θεῶν, καὶ τὴν Αἰγυπτίαν Ἑσέθειαν περιέχοντα· οἷον περὶ θυμῶν, ἀπαρχῶν, ὕμνων, εὐχῶν, πομπῶν, ἐορῶν, καὶ τῶν τέτοις ὁμοίων. *Clem. Alex. Stromat.* l. 6. p. 633. Ed. *Parisi.*

ⁱ Ἡμέραν δὲ εἰς θερραπείαν τῶν Θεῶν, καθ’ ἣν ἢ τρις ἢ τετρακτὶς, κατὰ τὴν ἑω, καὶ τὴν ἑσπέραν, μεσερανεῖν καὶ τὴν ἡλιαν καὶ πρὸς δύσιν κατὰφερόμενον τῶν ὕμνων. *Porphy. de Abstinent.* l. 4. §. 8. p. 153. Ed. *Cantabr.*

^k Τὸν τοίνυν χρόνον τῆς ἡμέρας, καὶ τῆς νύκτος τὴν πλεῖστον εἰς ὕμνους τῶν Θεῶν ἀπενεμῖαν καὶ εὐχάς. *Ib.* §. 12. p. 168.

“ from the body, they sing an hymn, and die¹.” And, in another place, explaining that symbol of Pythagoras, “ That drink-offerings are to be poured out to the gods, by the ear of the cups ; by this, says he, is intimated, that we ought to honour the gods, and sing hymns to them with music, for this goes through the ears^m”. Very remarkable is a passage of Arrianus, the stoic philosopher ; “ If, says he, we are intelligent creatures, what else should we do, both in public and private, than to sing an hymn to the Deity, to speak well of him, and give thanks unto him ? Should we not, whether digging or plowing, or eating, sing an hymn to God ? Great is God, who has given us these instruments, by which we till the earth. Great is God, that has given us hands, a faculty of swallowing, and a belly ; that we secretly grow and increase, and that, whilst we sleep, we breathe ; each of these things ought to be taken notice of in an hymn : But the greatest and most divine hymn we ought to sing is, that he has given us a reasonable faculty of using these things in a right way : What shall I say, since many of you are blind ? ought not some one to fill up this place, and give out an hymn to God for you all ?——If I was a nightingale, I would do as a nightingale ; and if a swan, as a swan ; but since I am a rational creature, I ought to praise God ; this is my work ; this I will do ; nor will I desert this station to the utmost of my power ; and I exhort you to the self same songⁿ.” And in another place he says,
“ This

¹ Περὶ τὸ σῶμα παραδόντες, ὅπως δὲ καθαρῶν τὴν ἀποκρίνωσι τῷ σώματι τὴν ψυχὴν ὑμνέμενοι τελευτήσωσι. Ibid. §. 18. p. 170.

^m Σπονδὰς τὲ ποιεῖσθαι τοῖς Θεοῖς κατὰ τὸ ὅς τῶν ἐκπομάτων. Ἐν-
τεῦθεν γὰρ ἡντίκειο τιμὰν τῆς Θεῶς καὶ ὑμνεῖν τῇ μεσικῇ, αὐτὴ γὰρ δια-
ώτων χωρεῖ. Ib. de vita Pythag. p. 200. Ed. Cantabr.

ⁿ Ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἔν ἐν ἡμῶν, ἀλλὰ τί ἔδει ἡμᾶς ποιεῖν καὶ ποιῆσαι καὶ ἰδίᾳ, ἢ ὑμνεῖν
τὸ Θεῶν, καὶ εὐφραμεῖν, καὶ ἐπεξέρχεσθαι τὰς χάριτας ; ἐκ ἔδει καὶ σκάπσιον, καὶ
ἀφ᾽ ἑλίας καὶ ἐσθίουας, ἀδελφὸν τὸν ὕμνον τὸν εἰς τὸν Θεόν ; μέγας ὁ Θεός, ὅτι
ἡμῶν

“ This is my work whilst I live, to sing an hymn
 “ to God, both by myself, and before one or ma-
 “ ny”. Much of this language would well become
 the mouth of a Christian. It is observed concerning
 the muses^p, that they were chiefly employed about
 the hymns and worship of the gods; and that some
 of them had their names from thence, as Melpo-
 mene, Terpsichore, and Polymnia; and that Ho-
 mer^q got so much credit, admiration, and applause
 as he did, was owing, among other things, to the
 hymns which he composed for the gods; and there
 is still extant, among his works, an hymn to Apollo.
 Moreover, formerly rewards were proposed in the
 Pythian games^r, for such who best sung an hymn to
 the God. And Julian^s, the emperor, takes notice
 of many excellent hymns of the gods, which he ad-
 vises to learn, as being of great use in the know-
 ledge of things sacred; most of which, he says, were
 composed by the gods; some few by men inspired
 by a divine spirit. From these, and other instances
 which might be produced, we may conclude, that
 the Gentiles were obliged, by the law of nature, to
 this part of worship, and, by the light of nature,

were

κῆλιν παρέσχεν ὄργανα ταῦτα, δι' ἃν τὴν γῆν ἐργασόμεθα· μέγας ὁ Θεός,
 ὅτι χεῖρας δέδωκεν, ὅτι καλύπτει, ὅτι κοιλιάν, ὅτι αὐξέσθαι λεληθότως,
 ὅτι καθ' ὑδούρας ἀναπνεῖν. Ταῦτα ἐφ' ἑκάστη ἐφύμνειν ἰδεῖν, καὶ τὸν μέγιστον,
 καὶ θεϊοτάτον ὕμνον ἐφύμνειν, ὅτι τὴν δύναμιν ἰδῶκε τὴν παρακολοθητικὴν
 τέταν, καὶ ὁδῶ χρηστικὴν· τί ἔκ, ἐπεὶ οἱ πολλοὶ ἀποτελεύτῳσθε, ἐκ ἰδεῖν τίνα
 εἶναι τὸν ταύτην ἐκπληρῆναι τὴν χώραν, καὶ ὑπερ πάντων διαδιδόντα τὸν ὕμνον
 τὸν εἰς τὸν Θεόν; — εἰ γὰρ ἀνδρῶν ἡμῶν, ἐποίουν τὰ τῆς ἀνδρόν^θ, εἰ κύκλ^θ
 τὰ τῶ κύκλ^θ, νῦν δὲ λογικὸς εἰμι, ὕμνεῖν με δεῖ τὸν Θεόν· τὸ τὸ μὴ τὸ ἔργον
 εἶναι. Ποιῶ αὐτὸ, ὅδ' ἐγκαταλείψω τὴν τάξιν ταύτην, ἐφόσον ἂν διδῶναι
 καὶ ὑμᾶς ἐπὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ταύτην ὥδην παρακαλῶ. *Arrian. Epictet. l. 1.*
c. 16, p. 127, 128. Ed. Cantabr.

^o Καὶ ζῳὸς μὴ τὸ τὸ ἔργον ἦν, ὕμνεῖν τὸν Θεόν, καὶ αὐτὸν ἐπ' ἐμαυτῷ,
 καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν, καὶ πρὸς πολλούς. *Ib. l. 3. c. 26. p. 350.*

^p *Pburnutus de natura deorum, p. 22, 23. Ed. Gale.*

^q *Herodotus de vita Homeri, c. 9. p. 58. Ed. Gronov.*

^r *Pausanias in Phocis, sive l. 10. p. 620. Ed. Hanov.*

^s *Opera, p. 551. Ed. Paris. 4^o. 1630, of these hymns to the
 gods, see more in Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 17. prope
 finem.*

were directed to it; and consequently that it is a part of natural religion and moral worship. Moreover,

2. It is evident, that the people of God sung songs of praise to him before the law was given by Moses. When the Lord so remarkably appeared for the children of Israel, by delivering them out of the hands of the Egyptians, and carrying them safely through the Red-Sea, though their enemies were drowned in it; "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song, unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea", &c." Miriam and the Israelitish women, sung the same. This is the first song the scriptures make mention of; though, the Jews say, Adam sung one before. Now, by what law did the Israelites sing this song? it could not be by the Levitical law; for that system of laws was not as yet given to that people; and when that body of laws was delivered to them, we do not find that singing of God's praises was any part of it; it is not to be met with in the whole body of Jewish laws, given out by Moses; why then should it be reckoned of ceremonious institution, or a part of worship peculiar to the Old Testament? Nor was it by any positive law, or according to any part of external revelation God had made to the sons of men, the children of Israel sung; for no such positive law was extant, or any such revelation made, as we know of: It remains then, that in doing this, they acted according to the dictates of their consciences, and the examples which might have been before them, by which they were influenced, as to cry to the Lord when in distress, so to sing his praises when they were delivered.

3. It may easily be observ'd, that when psalmody was in the most flourishing condition among the Israelites,

^c Exod. xv. 1, 20, 21.

^d Vid. Targum, in Cant. i. 1. and my notes upon it.

raelites, under the direction and influence of David their king, the sweet Psalmist of Israel, it was not confined to that people; but all nations of the earth were called upon, and exhorted to sing the praises of God, even by the Psalmist himself; “Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands,” *Heb.* all the earth, “sing forth the honour of his name; make his praise glorious. Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy; for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah. O sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord all the earth, sing unto the Lord; bless his name, shew forth his salvation from day to day.” Now if singing was not a part of moral worship, but of a ceremonious kind, and peculiar to the Old Testament-dispensation, the nations of the earth would have had no concern in it; it would not have been obligatory upon them, but proper only to the Israelites, to whom alone pertaineth the giving of the law and the service of God.

4. Nothing is more manifest, than that when ceremonial worship was in its greatest glory, and legal sacrifices in highest esteem, that singing of Psalms and spiritual songs was preferred unto them, as being more acceptable to God; “I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving, says David; This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock, that hath horns and hoofs.” Now can any other reason of this difference be given, than that the sacrifice of an ox or bullock was of ceremonial institution; whereas, praising God was a part of moral worship, which might be performed in a spiritual and evangelic manner?

5. When

^w Psal. lxxvi. 1, 2. lxxvii. 3, 4. and xcvi. 1, 2. lxxix. 30, 31.

^x Psal.

5. When the ceremonial law, with all its instituted rites, was abolished, this duty of singing remained in full force. The apostle Paul, in his epistles written to the churches at Ephesus and Colosse, declares in the one, that the middle wall of partition, between Jew and Gentile, was broken down: Meaning the ceremonial law, and that which was the cause of enmity between both; even “the law of commandments, contained in ordinances, was abolished:” And in the other, says, “Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ²;” and yet, in both^a, exhorts them to sing “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.” Now it is not reasonable to suppose, that the same apostle, in the same epistles, written to the same persons, should declare them disengaged from some things, and under obligation to regard others, if these equally belonged to the ceremonial law, and were alike peculiar to the Old Testament-dispensation.

6. This practice of singing the praises of God, has been performed by creatures who were never subject to the ceremonial law; by whom I mean not the Gentiles, who have been already taken notice of, but the angels, who, though subject to the moral law, so far as their nature and condition will admit of; yet, in no one instance, were ever concerned in ceremonial service. Now these holy and spiritual beings were very early employed in this divine and heavenly work of singing; these morning stars, so called for their brightness and glory, sang together; these sons of God, by creation, shouted for joy, when the foundations of the earth were fastened, and the
corner

^a Eph. ii. 14, 15.
Col. iii. 16.

² Col. ii. 16, 17.

^a Eph. v. 19.

corner stone thereof laid^b: As they did also when the corner stone of man's redemption was laid in the incarnation of the Son of God; at which time
 “ there was with the angel, a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to
 “ God in the highest, and on earth peace, good
 “ will towards men^c,” who likewise will join with the saints in Hallelujahs and songs of praise to God, throughout an endless eternity. For,

7. We may say of this duty what the apostle says of charity^d, that it never faileth, though prophecies, tongues, and knowledge shall. For, when all ordinances, whether of a moral nature, or of positive institution, shall cease, such as prayer, preaching, baptism, the Lord's-supper, and the like; this will continue, and be in its greatest glory and perfection. This will be the employment of saints when raised out of their dusty beds, on the resurrection morn, in the power and virtue of the resurrection of their risen Lord. “ Thy dead men shall live, together with, or
 “ as my dead body, shall they arise: Awake and
 “ sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as
 “ the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the
 “ dead^e.” These having their souls and bodies reunited, shall come to the Zion above, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: These shall stand upon the mount with the Lamb, and sing in the height of it, even that new song which no one can learn, but those who are redeemed from the earth. But I proceed,

III. To consider the subject-matter of singing, or what that is which is to be sung. The direction of the apostle Paul in this case, is certainly to be regarded, who, in two distinct epistles^f, exhorts to the singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; and what these are, it will be proper to enquire. And,

1. By

^b Job xxxviii. 6, 7. ^c Luke ii. 14. ^d 1 Cor. xiii. 8.
^e Isa. xxvi. 19. ^f Eph. v. 19. Col. iii. 16.

1. By psalms, is meant the book of psalms, composed by David, Asaph, Heman, and others, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God; which is the only sense in which this word is used throughout the whole New Testament: Nor is there any reason to believe, that the apostle Paul designs any other in the above-mentioned places; or the apostle James, when he says^g, “Is any merry? let him sing psalms.” Those who are of a different mind, ought to shew in what other sense this word is used, and where, and what those psalms are we are to sing, if not the psalms of David, &c. since it is certain, there are psalms which are to be sung under the New Testament-dispensation.

2. By hymns, we are to understand, not such as are composed by good men, without the inspiration of the Spirit of God. I observe indeed, from ancient writers, and from ecclesiastical history^h, that such compositions were made use of very early, even from the times of the apostles; and I deny not but that they may now be useful; though a great deal of care should be taken that they be agreeable to the sacred writings, and the analogy of faith, and that they be expressed, as much as can be, in scripture-language; yet, after all, I must confess, that I cannot but judge them, in a good measure, unnecessary, since we are so well provided with a book of psalms, and scriptural songs, indited by the Spirit of God, and suitable on all occasions: However, I cannot think that such composures are designed by the apostle; nor can I believe that he would place such

F 2 between

^g James v. 13. ^h *Clemens Alexandr. Paedagog.* l. 3. c. 12. in fine, p. 266. Ed. *Parisi. Tertullian. Apolog.* c. 39. p. 36. Ed. *Rigalt. Euseb. Eccles. Hist.* l. 2. c. 17. p. 55, 56. and l. 5. c. 28. p. 196. and l. 7. c. 24. p. 271. Ed. *Vales.* Of these hymns, see more in *Fabricii Biblioth. Graec.* Vol. 5. c. 1. p. 195, 196, &c., and *Bibliograph. Antiq.* c. 11. p. 368, &c. These were first objected to by *Paul of Samosata. Euseb.* l. 7. c. 30. p. 281. and prohibited by the council of *Laodicea*, in Can. 59.

between psalms and spiritual songs, made by men inspired by the Holy Ghost, and put them upon a level with them, to be sung equally with them, to the edification of the churches; therefore, I take hymns to be but another name for the book of psalms; for the running title of that book may as well be, the book of hymns, as of psalms; and so it is render'd by Ainsworth, who also particularly calls the 145th psalm, an hymn of David: So the psalm which our Lord sung with his disciples, after the supper, is called an hymn, as the psalms of David in general, are called, by Philo the Jewⁱ, ὕμνοι, hymns, as they are also songs and hymns by Josephus^k.

3. By spiritual songs, may be meant the same psalms of David, Asaph, &c. the titles of some of which, are^l, songs, as sometimes a psalm and song, a song and psalm, a song of degrees, and the like; together with all other scriptural songs, written by men inspired by God; and are called spiritual, because the author of them is the Spirit of God, the writers of them men moved and acted by the same Spirit; the subject-matter of them spiritual, designed for spiritual edification, and opposed to all profane, loose and wanton songs.

These three words, psalms, hymns, and songs, answer to מִזְמוֹרִים, תְּהִלִּים, and שִׁירִים, the titles of David's psalms; and are, by the Septuagint, rendered by the Greek words the apostle uses. I shall not trouble you with observing to you how these three are distinguished by learned men^m, one from another, but only observe, what has been remarked by others before me; that whereas the apostle, in his exhortations to singing, directs to the titles of David's psalms, it is highly reasonable to conclude, that

ⁱ L. de Mutat. nom. & l. de Somniis & alibi. ^k Antiq. l. 7. c. 12. ^l So Psal. xxx, xlv, xlvi, xlviii, lxv, lxvi, lxvii, lxviii, lxxv, lxxvi, lxxxiii, lxxxvii, lxxxviii, xcii, cviii, cxvii, to cxxxiv.

^m Vid. Zanchium, Grotium, & Hammond, in Eph. v. 19. Beza in Col. iii. 16. & Leigh's Critica Sacra in voce, ὕμνοι.

that it was his intention that we should sing them : But, inasmuch as there are some queries, scruples, and objections about the singing of them, it will be proper to attempt a satisfactory answer to them.

(1.) It is inquired, whether the book of Psalms was originally written in verse or metre? The reason of this enquiry is, that if it should appear that it was not originally written in Hebrew metre, then there is no reason why it should be translated into metre in another language, and so consequently not to be sung in the manner we do. To which, I answer, That the book of Psalms, with some other writings of the Old Testament, were originally written in metre, is universally allowed by the Jews, and does also appear from the different accentuation of them, from that of other books. Josephus", a learned Jew, says, " That David being free from war, and enjoying a profound peace, composed songs and hymns to God, of various metre; some trimetre, *i. e.* consisting of three feet, and others pentametre, *i. e.* of five feet." David's Psalms seem to be of the Lyric kind; hence Jerom, who, of all the fathers, best understood the Hebrew language, calls " David, our Simonides, Pindar, Alcaeus, Flaccus, Catullus, and Serenus," who were all of them Lyric poets. And, in another place, he says, " If it should seem incredulous to any that the Hebrews have metre, or that the Psalms or the Lamentations of Jeremiah, or almost all the scriptural songs are composed after the manner of our Flaccus, and the Greek Pindar, and Alcaeus, and Sappho; let him read Philo, Josephus, Eusebius Caesariensis, and he will find, by their testi-

monies,

[illegible]

“monies, that what I say is true^o.” The learned Gomarus, in his *Lyra*^p, has given out of the Psalms, and other poetical books of the scriptures, several hundred of instances of verse of the Iambic, Trochaic, Dactylic, Anapaestic, Choriambic, Ionic, Antispastic, and Paconic kind, which he has compared with a like number out of Pindar and Sophocles. The Jews indeed have now lost the knowledge of the sacred poetry, and have been, for many hundred of years, unacquainted with it; though R. Benjamin Tudelenfis^q says, that there lived in his time, at Bagdad, one R. Eleazar, and his brethren, who knew how to sing the songs as the singers did, when the temple was standing. But be this as it will, there is reason enough to conclude, that the book of Psalms was originally written in verse; and therefore it is lawful to be translated into verse, in order to be sung in the churches of Christ.

(2.) It is queried, whether the book of Psalms is suitable to the present gospel-dispensation, and proper to be sung in gospel-churches. I answer, Nothing is more suitable to the gospel-state, or more proper to be sung in the churches of Christ; since it is so full of prophecies concerning the person, offices, grace and kingdom of the Messiah; concerning his sufferings, and death, his resurrection, ascension, and session at the right hand of God; which are now more clearly understood, and are capable of being sung by believers, in a more evangelic manner than when they were first composed: Besides, this

^o *David, Simonides noster, Pindarus & Alcaeus, Flaccus quoque Catullus & Serenus Christum lyra personat. Hieron. Ep. ad Paulin. inter opera ejus. Tom. 3. p. 3. Ed. Paris. Quod si cui videtur incredulum metra scilicet esse apud Hebraeos, & in morem nostri Flacci, Graecique Pindari & Alcaei, & Sapphus, vel Psalterium, vel Lamentationes Hieremiac, vel omnia ferme scripturarum cantica comprehendere, legat Philonem, Josephum, Origenem, Caesariensem Busebium, & eorum testimonio me verum dicere comprobabit. Ib. p. 8.*

^p *Inter ejus opera. Tom. 2. p. 317, &c.*

^q *R. Benjamin. Massao vel Itinerarium. p. 70, 71. Ed. L'Empereur.*

this book is full of exceeding great and precious promises, as the ground of the faith and hope of God's people; it is a large fund of experience, a rich mine of gospel-grace and truth, and is abundantly suited to every case, state and condition, the church of Christ, or a particular believer, is in at any time. A little care and prudence used in the choice of proper psalms, on particular occasions, would fully discover the truth of this.

(3.) It is objected, that persons often meet with things which are not, and which they cannot make their own case; yea, sometimes with what is shocking and startling to a Christian mind; such as imprecations and curses, on enemies or wicked men. And it is asked, Should persons sing cases not their own, and such things as these now mentioned; would they not be guilty of lying to God, and of want of that charity to men which is so much recommended under the gospel-dispensation? To which, I reply, That as to singing cases not our own, this is no more lying to God than reading them is, singing being but a slower way of pronounciation in a musical manner; therefore, if this ought to deter persons from singing, it should also from reading: Besides, in public worship, we sing not as single persons, but in conjunction with, and as parts of the community, and body of the people; so that what may not be suitable to one, may be so to another, and in both, the end of praise be answered. Moreover, when we sing the cases of others, and which we cannot make our own, we sing them as such, and not as our own sense and experience; which yet may be very useful to us, either by way of example, or advice, or comfort, or instruction, or admonition, and the like: And if this should not be the case, yet there are two other principal ends of singing, *viz.* the praise and glory of God, and the edification of others, which may be attained this way; and, after all, the same objection

objection will lie against public prayer, as much as against public singing; since no prayer put up by the minister, in public; at least; not all the petitions in it, any more than every psalm or hymn, sung in public, are suitable to the cases of all persons present; yet this has not been thought a sufficient argument against public prayer, or to deter persons from joining in it: As for imprecations and curses on wicked men, though the scriptural instances of them are no examples to us to do the like; because these were made by men under the inspiration of the Spirit of God; yet they were prophetic hints of ruin and destruction to wicked men, and as such should be considered, and may be sung by us; and that to the glory of God and some instruction to ourselves; for herein we may observe the justice and holiness of God, the vile nature of sin, the indignation of God against it, and the just abhorrence and detestation that sin and sinners are had in with God, and should he had in with all good men.

(4.) It is said, that if we must sing the psalms of David, and others, then we must sing by a form; and if we may sing by a form, why not pray by one? I answer, the case is different; the ordinance of prayer may be performed without a form, but not the ordinance of singing: The Spirit of God is promised as a Spirit of grace and supplication, but not as a spirit of poetry. And suppose a person had a gift of delivering out an extempore psalm or hymn, that psalm or hymn would be a form to the rest that joined with him; unless we suppose a whole congregation to have such a gift, and every one sing his own psalm or hymn; but then that, namely, joining voices together, which is the beauty, glory, and harmony of this ordinance, would be mere jargon, confusion, and discord. Besides, we have a book of psalms, but we have not a prayer-book: Had we a book of prayers, composed by men inspired by the Spirit of God,

as we have a book of psalms made by such, we should think ourselves under equal obligation to pray by a form, as we now do to sing by one. Add to this, that the psalms of David were composed on purpose to be sung by a form, in the very express words of them, as they accordingly were. David, when he had wrote them, sent them to Asaph, and his brethren, or to the chief musician, the master of the song, who had the management of it, or some such person, to be made use of in public; for thus it is written', "Then on that day David delivered
" first this psalm, to thank the Lord, into the hands
" of Asaph and his brethren." And we may observe, that some hundreds of years after, the psalms of David and Asaph were sung in the express words of them, by the order of king Hezekiah; for so it is said', "Moreover, Hezekiah, the king and the
" princes, commanded the Levites to sing praise
" unto the Lord, with the words of David and of
" Asaph, the seer; and they sang praises with glad-
" ness, and they bowed their heads and worship-
" ped." Hence also, when the people of God were exhorted to sing his praise, they were bid not to make, but take a psalm, ready made to their hands';
" Sing aloud unto God our strength; make a joy-
" ful noise unto the God of Jacob; take a psalm,
" and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp,
" with the psaltery." Which leads me,

(5.) To consider another objection made against singing the psalms of David. The singing of these was formerly attended with the use of musical instruments; such as the harp, timbrel, cymbals, and the like: If then they are to be sung now, why not with these instruments, as heretofore? and if these are disused, why should not singing itself? I reply, That the use of musical instruments was not essential to

' 1 Chron. xvi. 7. ' 2 Chron. xxix. 30. : Psal. lxxxi. 1, 2.

to singing; therefore, though these are laid aside, that continues. The Old Testament-dispensation was a showy, gaudy, and pompous one, suited to the then infant state of the church; there were many ceremonious rites which attended the worship of God, even that part of it which was of a moral nature; which ceremonious rites, though now abolished, the worship being of a moral nature, remains in full force: As for instance; it was usual to burn incense at the time of prayer; now the use of incense, which was typical of the acceptance of the prayers of the saints, through the mediation of Christ, is laid aside; but the duty of prayer, being of a moral nature, continues: So the use of musical instruments, which attended the work of singing the praises of God, and were typical of inward spiritual melody, is at an end, when singing, being equally of a moral nature with prayer, is still obligatory. It is now sufficient, if, when we sing vocally, at the same time we make melody in our hearts to the Lord. I close this with an observation of an ancient writer"; " Barely to sing, says he, is not fit for babes, but to sing with inanimate instruments, with cymbals, and with dancing; wherefore, in the churches (*i. e.* under the gospel-dispensation) the use of such instruments, and others, fit for babes, is taken away, and bare or plain singing remains." I proceed,

IV. To point out to you the persons who are to sing, and who ought to be found in the performance of this duty: I shall take no notice of a private person's singing by himself, alone, or of the family-discharge

" Οὐ τὸ ᾄσαι ἀπλῶς ἐστὶ τοῖς νηπίοις ἀρμόδιον, ἀλλὰ τὸ μετὰ τῶν ψυχρῶν ὀργάνων ᾄσαι, καὶ μετὰ ὀρχήσεως καὶ κροτάλων; διὸ ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις προαίρεται (lege, παρήρηται) ἐκ τῶν ἀσμάτων ἡ χρῆσις τῶν τοιαύτων ὀργάνων, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν νηπίοις ὄντων ἀρμόδιων, καὶ υπολείπειν τὸ ᾄσαι ἀπλῶς. Autor Quaest. & Respons. ad orthodox. inter Justin. opera, p. 462. Ed. Paris.

discharge of this duty, or of its being done in concert, between two or more persons; no doubt but it is lawful for a single person to sing the praises of God alone, at home, in his own house, in his closet, when he thinks proper; and it may very laudably be performed in Christian families, where they are able to carry it on with decency and good order; yea, any two, or more persons, may join together in this part of divine service, as Paul and Silas did in prison^w, who, “at midnight, prayed and sang praises unto God;” which is an instance of singing vocally, and in concert; and was attended with some miraculous operations, with which all gospel-ordinances were at first confirmed; and which brought on, and issued in the conversion of the jailor. But what I shall chiefly attend to, will be to prove that gospel-churches, or the churches of Christ, under the gospel-dispensation, ought to sing the praises of God vocally; and this I shall do from the following considerations.

1. From the prophecies of the Old Testament, which declare, that the churches, in gospel-times, should sing; and in which they are called upon, exhorted, and encouraged to do it. In many of the psalms, which respect the times of the Messiah, and the gathering of the Gentiles to him under the gospel-dispensation, such as the 47th, 68th, and 95th, the people of God are frequently invited to sing praise unto him, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. Likewise, in the prophecies of Isaiah^x, it is declared, that not only the watchmen, gospel-ministers, such whose feet are beautiful on the mountains, who bring good tidings, and publish peace and salvation, “shall lift up the voice, and “that with the voice together shall they sing;” but also the churches under their care, and such souls

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they

^w Acts xvi. 25. ^x Isa. lii. 7, 8, 9. and xxxv. 1, 2, 6, 10. and xxvi. 1. and liv. 1.

they are made useful to, are called upon to “ break
 “ forth into joy, and sing together ;” yea, it is prom-
 ised, that the Gentile church, under the name of
 “ the wilderness, and solitary place, shall be glad
 “ and rejoice, even with joy and singing ; that even
 “ the tongue of the dumb shall sing, and the ran-
 “ somed of the Lord return, and come to Zion
 “ with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.”
 Moreover, that in that day, meaning the gospel-
 day, shall this song be sung in the land of Judah, in
 the gospel-church : “ We have a strong city ; sal-
 “ vation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.”
 To add no more, how expressly is the Gentile church
 exhorted and encouraged to this work, in another
 part of these prophecies ? where it is said, “ Sing,
 “ O barren, thou that didst not bear ; break forth
 “ into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not
 “ travail with child ; for more are the children of
 “ the desolate than the children of the married wife,
 “ saith the Lord.” Blessed be God, these predic-
 tions are, in a great measure, fulfilled ; gospel-
 churches among the Gentiles, as well as in the land
 of Judea, have lift up their voices, and sung the
 praises of God according to these prophecies ; which
 is, at once, a confirmation of the authority of the
 scriptures, and of the truth of this ordinance. But,

2. I prove it to be a duty incumbent on gospel-
 churches, under the New Testament-dispensation,
 from express precepts and directions given to them
 concerning it. It is not only prophesied of in the
 Old Testament, but it is also commanded in the
 New, that they should sing. The church at Ephe-
 sus was a gospel-church, as was also that at Colosse ;
 and they are both expressly enjoined as such, by the
 apostle Paul, who in this, as in other things, had the
 mind of Christ, to “ sing psalms, hymns, and spiri-
 “ tual songs.” Besides, if singing was not a duty
 belong-

belonging to New Testament-churches, why should any directions about it be given to them? such as to sing with grace in their hearts, with the spirit, and with the understanding; and to do it in such a manner, so as to speak to themselves, and to teach and admonish one another².

3. That New Testament-churches should sing, will more fully appear from New Testament-instances and examples. There are not only prophecies and precepts, but also precedents in favour of this practice; and the first instance of this kind I shall mention, is, that of Christ and his apostles, who sung an hymn, as a church, at the close of the Lord's-supper; of this the evangelist assures us; "When they had sung an hymn, says he, they went out unto the mount of olives^a." Our ears are continually dinned, by those who are of a different mind from us, with an old translation, in which, they say, the words are rendered, "When they had given thanks." But, First, This work was done already; "he, *i. e.* Christ, took the cup, and gave thanks." Secondly, A different word from that is here used, and which, in its first and primary sense, signifies to sing an hymn, or song, to the honour of God. And, Thirdly, This old translation must be a false one, since it fixes such a character of rudeness and arrogance upon the apostles, as is unbecoming the disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus; what, they give thanks! what business had they to give thanks? Had they done so, they had took upon them an office, and thrust themselves into a province that did not belong to them. Who should give thanks but Christ, the master of the feast, who was then in person present at his own table? No, they sung an hymn in concert, with their Lord at the head of them; which hymn was either one of Christ's composing on that special occasion, or rather was a part of

² 1 Cor. xiv. 15. Eph. v. 19. Col. iii. 16. ^a Matt. xxvi. 30.

of the Hallel^b, the Jews sung at the passover, which began with the 113th, and ended with the 118th psalm; the first part of which they sung before they sat down to eat, and the other after they had eaten, and after they had drunk the fourth and last cup; which last part seems to have been postponed the eating of the Lord's-supper, as containing in it several verses suitable to that ordinance, especially the closing part, which is this; " I will praise thee for
 " thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone which the builders refused, is
 " become the head-stone of the corner. This is the
 " Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This
 " is the day which the Lord hath made; we will
 " rejoice and be glad in it. Save now, I beseech
 " thee, O Lord. O Lord, I beseech thee, send
 " now prosperity. Blessed be he that cometh in the
 " name of the Lord. We have blessed you out of
 " the house of the Lord. God is the Lord which
 " hath shewed us light. Bind the sacrifice with
 " cords, even unto the horns of the altar. Thou
 " art my God, and I will praise thee; thou art my
 " God, I will exalt thee. O give thanks unto the
 " Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for
 " ever^c." For my own part, it would be agreeable to me, if this was always sung at the celebration of this ordinance. But to return to my argument. This hymn, or psalm, was sung by Christ and his apostles, as a church; which, though one of the least of the churches, yet the purest that ever was on earth; where Christ sung, according to his promise made long before, when he said^d, " I will declare thy
 " name unto my brethren: In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee;" which the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, cites in this manner;
 " I

^b Vid. *Buxtorf*. Lex. Talmud. in voce, ללל col. 613, ^e *Lightfoot*, Vol. 2. p. 354, 444, 1160. ^c Psal. cxviii. 21, to the end. ^d Psal. xxii. 22.

“ I will declare thy name unto my brethren, and
“ in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto
“ thee, ὑμνήσω σε; will I sing an hymn unto thee;”
which he accordingly did sing in the midst of the
congregation, the church, among his brethren, the
apostles, at the institution of the supper; and is an
example we ought to follow at the administration of
that ordinance.

The church at Corinth, in the times of the apostles, sung psalms: There were, indeed, some disorders among them, in the performance of this, as well as other parts of public worship, which the apostle Paul endeavours to rectify in his epistle to them; “ How is it then, brethren? says he, when ye come
“ together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a
“ doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath
“ an interpretation; let all things be done to edify-
“ ing;” where he does not blame them for those things, provided care was taken to avoid confusion, and that the edification of each other was regarded: And what he says in my text, with respect to himself and his own conduct in the discharge of both the duties of prayer and singing, is designed as an example and an instruction to this church.

The book of Revelation is a representation of the state and condition, service and sufferings of the churches of Christ on earth, in the several periods of time, until his second coming; in which we have frequently an account of their being concerned in this work of singing*, either the Lamb’s new song, or the song of Moses, or both; and which is represented as their employment, more or less, until the end of time. Now, since we have prophecy, precept, and precedent, for the practice of singing in New Testament-churches, none should scruple the performance of it. But, before I dismiss this part of
my

* Heb. ii. 12. † 1 Cor. xiv. 26. ‡ Rev. v. 9, 10. and
xiv. 1, 3. and xv. 3. and xix. 1—7.

my subject, it will be necessary to give an answer to the two following queries.

(1.) Whether women should sing in public, or in the churches? The reason of this query is, because the apostle says^h, “ Let your women keep silence in
“ the churches; for it is not permitted unto them
“ to speak; but they are commanded to be under
“ obedience, as also saith the law. And if they
“ will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands
“ at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in
“ the church.” From whence it is inferred, that if women are to be silent, and not to speak in the church, then they are not to sing or speak to themselves and others, in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. To which I answer, that it is evident the apostle is to be understood of such kind of speaking in public, as carries in it authority over the man, which singing does not; so he explains himself in another place, “ Let the women learn in silence, in
“ all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach
“ nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in
“ silenceⁱ.” It is certain, that all kind of speaking in the church, is not forbidden to women; otherwise it would not be lawful for them to give an account of the work of God upon their souls, by word of mouth; nor could they be witnesses for or against any member of the church chargeable with any iniquity. In these and such like cases, they have, no doubt, a right, and should have the liberty of speaking in the church: As for singing of psalms, though, as an ancient^k writer observes, “ The apostle commands
“ women to be silent in the church; yet they are
“ capable of performing this service well, which is
“ agreeable to every age, and fit for both sexes.” And indeed, if this is a part of moral worship, as I think,

^h 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35. ⁱ 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12. ^k Mulieres apostolus in ecclesia tacere jubet, psalmum etiam bene clamant; hic omni dulcis aetati, hic utrique aptus est sexui. *Ambros.* in Psal. i.

think, I have sufficiently proved it is, it must be a duty belonging to them, and binding on them: Besides, it has been practised by them in all ages of the church. Miriam, and the Israelitish women, sung, as well as Moses and the children of Israel; at the Red-Sea; as did also Deborah with Barak; and not to take notice of the singing women in the temple-service, there is a prophecy of gospel-times, in which it is said^l, that a “ great company of the blind and “ lame, with the woman with child, and her that “ travaileth with child, should come and sing in the “ height of Zion;” and indeed, what else is the woman’s prophesying^m, which the apostle does not object to, though he does to her doing it with her head uncovered, any other than her singing of psalms? as is well judged by a learned writerⁿ; since prophecy is explained by the same apostle, by singing as well as by praying and preaching in another place^o.

(2.) It is a case of conscience with some, whether they should sing in a mixed multitude, or in the presence of unbelievers, they joining with them. The solution of which, I would attempt in the following manner; let it be observed, that singing, as a part of moral worship, is binding on all men, without exception, believers and unbelievers; the former, indeed, are the only persons who are capable of performing it in a spiritual and evangelic manner; but the latter may have a sense of God’s goodness upon their minds, and be able to praise him for their temporal mercies, though they cannot do it in faith, nor without sin; nor indeed, can they perform a natural or civil action, any more than a moral one, without sin; for the “ plowing of the wicked is “ sin^p.” But it does not from hence follow, that a man

^l Jer. xxxi. 8—12. ^m 1 Cor. xi. 5. ⁿ *Lightfoot*, Vol. 2. p. 785, 1157. ^o 1 Cor. xiv. 15, 24, 26. ^p Prov. xxi. 4.

man must not plow, or perform any civil action, because he sins in it. And so likewise it ought not to be concluded, that a man should not pray, or sing psalms, or perform any other moral action, because he cannot do it in a spiritual way; for it is better for him to do it in the best way he can than not at all. But, supposing that it is not the duty of unbelievers to sing psalms, it will be very difficult to know who are such in public assemblies; and if such should join with you, why should this affect you that are believers? Will this sin of theirs be ever laid to your charge, or you be accountable for it? Should you neglect your duty because they are not in theirs? Must your mouths be stopped, because theirs are open? Should you not rather blush and take shame to yourselves? When you see them so forward to what you judge is not their duty, and you yourselves so backward to it. Besides, it has been the practice of the saints, in all ages, to sing in mixed assemblies. There was a mixed multitude which came up with the Israelites out of Egypt, in whose presence Moses and the children of Israel sung at the Red-Sea, and who, very probably, joined with them in the song, since they had a share in the common deliverance. The psalmist David, declared it as his resolution, and, no doubt but it was his practice, when he had opportunity, to sing the praises of God among the Heathens. “Therefore, says he, will I give thanks
 “unto thee, O Lord, among the Heathen, and sing
 “praises unto thy name. I will praise thee, O Lord,
 “among the people, I will sing unto thee among
 “the nations^a.” The church, in Solomon’s song, is represented, not only as taking her part in the song in the midst of, but as joining with the daughters of Jerusalem, tho’ they were ignorant of Christ her beloved. It is evident, that the church at Co-

rinth

^a Psal. xviii. 49. and lvii. 9.

ninth sung psalms in the presence of unbelievers, as well as performed other parts of public worship; which was one reason that made the apostle so desirous of rectifying the irregularities in this, as in the rest; that so unbelievers, who came in among them, might be convinced and obliged to own, that God was in them of a truth. Moreover, inasmuch as unbelievers are admitted to public prayers, and to join with you in them, why not to public singing? especially, since some ends of this ordinance cannot be answered without their presence; which are to “declare the Lord’s doings among the people, and “make known his wonders and his glory among “the Heathen:” To add no more, this ordinance has been an ordinance for conversion; I have known it to be so, and so have others besides me; and a good reason this is why it should be continued publickly in our churches, and unbelievers be admitted to an attendance on it.

V. I come now to consider the manner in which this ordinance should be performed, which I shall do very briefly, and shall chiefly regard what is expressed in my text, in which the apostle is desirous that he might, and determines to, “sing with the Spirit, “and with the understanding also.”

I. “With the Spirit.” By which may be meant, either the extraordinary gift of the Spirit, by which the apostle was capable of delivering out a psalm or hymn extempore, and that in an unknown tongue; though he was determined to make use of this gift in such a way, as to be understood by others, that so they might receive some profit and edification by it; or else, by the Spirit, may be designed the Spirit of God, who is absolutely necessary to the spiritual performance of this duty. Believers, in the discharge of this work, stand in great need of him to

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excite

excite their attention, assist their meditations, enlighten their understandings, raise their affections, strengthen their faith, and make a comfortable application of what is sung to themselves; or, by singing with the spirit, may be meant, singing with his own spirit; and indeed, believers should be “*fer-
“ vent in spirit,*” whilst they are serving the Lord in any ordinance: As God is a Spirit, he must be worshipped in spirit, or with our spirits, that is, with our hearts engaged in the work we are concerned in; and then may we be said to sing with the spirit, when we sing with grace in our hearts, or in the lively exercise of faith, and hope, and love; for to the due performance of this ordinance in a spiritual way, are required a large measure of grace, a good deal of spiritual light, knowledge, experience and judgment; for we should sing,

2. “*With the understanding also;*” *i. e.* either in a language that is to be understood, or with the understanding of what is sung^s; “*sing ye praises
“ with understanding;*” or to the understanding of others; for one end of this duty is, to teach and admonish others as well as ourselves; and, perhaps, the apostle may have some regard here to one of the titles of David’s psalms^t, *viz.* מִשְׁכִּיל, *maschil*, which signifies a psalm, giving instruction, or causing to understand. Unless we sing in all these senses with understanding, we sing with little advantage, either to ourselves or others. In a word, besides our mutual edification, we should have in our view the glory of God; we are to “*sing unto the Lord,*” not to ourselves, or to raise our natural affections, or to gain applause from others, by the fineness of our voice, and exact conformity to the tune; but to the glory of Father, Son and Spirit, who are that one
God

^s Psal. xlvii. 7.

^t So Psal. xxxii. xlii. with many others,

God, who condescends to inhabit the praises of Israel.

Having now considered the several things I proposed, relating to the ordinance of singing, I shall subjoin a short account of the faith and practice of the saints in the three first centuries of Christianity, with respect either to singing alone, or in the family, or in the churches; which added to the scriptural account of this duty, may serve the more to confirm us in the practice of it.

If the Therapeutae, a sect of religious persons mentioned by Philo the Jew, who was cotemporary with the apostles, were Christians, as Eusebius^u thinks, then we have a proof, besides the scripture-ones, of the Christians singing of psalms and hymns in the times of the apostles; for of these Philo says, “ That they not only gave themselves up to a contemplative life, but composed songs and hymns to God, in various kinds of metre and verse; and which they wrote as was necessary in graver rhyme, and which they not only composed but sung^w;” though, perhaps, he may intend the Essenes, of whom Porphyry says^x, that “ They kept the seventh day of the week in hymns to God, and in rest.” There are some, indeed, who think^y they were neither, but a sect of Jewish philosophers: However this be, it is certain,

That there is now extant an epistle of Pliny to Trajan the emperor; in which he tells him, that one
part

^u Eccles. Hist. l. 2. c. 17. p. 59.

^w “Ὅσι δ' εὐαρεῶσι μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ ποιῶσιν ᾠσματα καὶ ὕμνος εἰς θεὸν διὰ παντῶν μέτρων καὶ μελῶν, ἃ ὕμνοις σεμνολοῖς ἀναγκαίως χαράτῃσι. Philo de vita contemplativa, p. 893. Ed. Paris. Ἐπεὶ ἄδεισι πεποιημένους εἰς τὸν θεὸν ὕμνος πολλοῖς μέτροις καὶ μέλισι. Ibid. p. 902.

^x Τῇ ἐβδομάδι μὴ δεῖσθαι κενώσεως, ἣν τηρεῖν ἐνώθασιν εἰς τὰς ὕμνος τῷ θεῷ, καὶ εἰς ἀνάπαυσιν. Porphyr. de Abstinent. l. 4. §. 13. p. 162.

^y Vid. Vales. not. in Euseb. p. 34, 35.

part of the charge against the Christians was, " That they used to meet together at a stated time, before it was light, and sing a hymn among themselves, to Christ, as to a god ^a." Tertullian refers to this letter, and expresses the charge in it thus ; " That they had their meetings before it was day, to sing to Christ and to God ^a." Eusebius cites the same, and observes, that " Pliny declared that he found nothing impious in them, nothing done by them contrary to the laws, except that rising early together, they sung an hymn to Christ after the manner of a god ^b." Now this letter was written in the latter end of the first century, or at the beginning of the second, and, as some think, whilst the apostle John was yet living.

Justin Martyr, *Anno* 150. in his epistle to Zena and Serenus, if it will be allowed to be genuine, speaks of the singing of psalms, hymns, and songs ; and directs to the use of psalmody, in such a manner, as not to grieve our neighbours ^c.

Athenogenes, a martyr, in the second century, as he was going to the fire, delivered an hymn to those that stood by, in which he celebrated the Deity of the blessed Spirit ^d.

Clemens Alexandrinus, *Anno* 190, or 200. speaking of a good man, says, " His whole life is a continual

^a Affirmabant autem, hanc fuisse summam vel culpaе suae vel erroris, quod essent soliti statim die, ante lucem convenire : Carmenque Christo quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem. *Plin. Ep.* 1. 10. *Ep.* 97. p. 278. *Ed. Londin.* 1722.

^b Nihil aliud se de sacramentis comperisse, quam coetus antelucanos ad canendum Christo & Deo. *Tertull. Apolog.* c. 2. p. 3.

^c Μηδὲν ἀνόσιον, μὴ δὲ παρὰ τὰς νόμους πράττειν αὐτὸς καὶ ἀπειθεῖν, πλὴν τὸ γε αἶμα τῇ ζωῇ διεγειρομένους, τὸν χριστὸν Θεὸν δίκην ὑμεῖν. *Euseb. Eccl. Hist.* 1. 3. c. 33. p. 105.

^d Ὅτι μὴ τις ἐκ ψαλμῶν καὶ ᾠδῶν καὶ ᾠδῶν ᾄδῃ, μὴ διὰ ψαλμωδίας τὸν πλησίον λυπεῖν. *Justin. ad Zenam*, p. 509. *Ed. Paris.*

^e Vid. *Fabricii Biblioth. Graec.* Vol. 5. c. 1. §. 24. p. 195.

“ tinal holy day; his sacrifices are prayer and praise;
 “ the scriptures are read before eating of food; and,
 “ whilst eating, psalms and hymns are sung; and,
 “ at night, before he goes to bed, prayer is per-
 “ formed again.” And, in another place, he ob-
 serves, that “ a man’s love, friendship, and good-
 will to God, should be shewn by thanksgiving and
 singing of psalms; and he himself composed an
 hymn to Christ, which is still extant at the end of
 his Paedagogue.

Tertullian, who lived about the same time, has
 many things in his writings, which shew that sing-
 ing of psalms, both publickly and privately, was
 practised in his day; in one place^e, he says “ Af-
 “ ter washing of hands, and lighting up of candles,
 “ meaning at their Christian meetings, and love-
 “ feasts, every one might come forth, and sing to
 “ God, either out of the holy scriptures, or what
 “ was of their own composing.” And, elsewhere^h,
 among the arguments he makes use of to prevail on
 Christians to marry among themselves, this is one;
 “ Psalms and hymns, says he, are harmoniously
 “ sung between the happy pair; and they provoke
 “ each other to sing the better to their God.” And
 in another placeⁱ, he speaks “ of the reading of the
 “ scrip-

^e “ Ἀπας δὲ ὁ βίβας αὐτῶν πανήγυρις ἀγία αὐτίκα θυσιᾶς μὲν αὐτῶν
 εὐχαὶ τὲ καὶ αἶνοι, καὶ αἱ πρὸ τῆς ἐστιάσεως ἐκτελεῖται τῶν γραφῶν ψαλμοὶ
 δὲ καὶ ὕμνοι παρὰ τὴν ἐστίαν. Πρὸ τοῦ τῆς κοίτης, ἀλλὰ, καὶ νύκτα,
 εὐχαὶ πάλιν. *Clement. Alex. Stromat. l. 7. p. 728, Ed. Paris.*

^f Προτέρα μὲν ἢ εἰς Θεὸν δι’ εὐχαριστίας καὶ ψαλμωδίας γενέσθω φι-
 λοφροσύνη. *Id. Paedagog. l. 2. c. 4. p. 165.*

^g Post aquam manualet & lumina, ut quisque de scripturis
 sanctis, vel de proprio ingenio potest, provocatur in medium Deo
 canere. *Tertull. Apolog. c. 39. p. 36.*

^h Sonant inter duos psalmi & hymni, & mutuo provocant, quis
 melius Deo suo cantet. *Ib. ad uxorem, l. 2. c. 8. p. 191.*

ⁱ Jam vero prout scripturae leguntur, aut psalmi canuntur, aut
 adlocutiones proferuntur, aut petitiones delegantur, ita inde mate-
 ria visionibus subministrantur. *Ib. de anima, c. 9. p. 311.*

“ scriptures, singing of psalms, preaching sermons, and of prayer”, as the several parts of publick worship. And to add no more, in another book^k he makes this to be one part of the happiness of a chaste and continent man, that, “ If he prays to the Lord, he is near to heaven; if he studies the scriptures, he is wholly there; if he sings a psalm, he pleases himself.”

Origen, *Anno* 226, or 230. speaking of the need of the Spirit of God in prayer, adds, “ Even as no man can sing a psalm or hymn to the Father in Christ, in good rhyme, proper verse and metre, and in concert, except the Spirit, who searcheth all things, even the deep things of God, first searches, and, as much as can be, comprehends the deep things of the mind, with songs of praise and hymns^l.”

Cyprian, *Anno* 246. exhorted Donatus to the practice of singing of psalms, in an epistle to him; “ Let a psalm, says he, be sung at a feast, kept with moderation; and that thou mayest have a retentive memory, let thy voice be melodious. Begin this work after the usual manner^m.”

Nepos, an Egyptian bishop, *Anno* 260. is greatly commended by Eusebius, not only for his faithfulness, labour, and diligence in the scriptures, but for his psalmody; which was very grateful to many of the brethren at that present timeⁿ.

I

^k Si orationem facit ad dominum, prope est Coelo. Scripturis incumbit, totus illic est. Si psalmum canit, placet sibi. Ib. de Exhort. Castitat. c. 10. p. 670.

^l Ὅσπερ ἐδὲ ψάλει καὶ εὐρύθμως καὶ ἑμμελῶς καὶ ἑμμέτρως καὶ συμφώνως ὑμῆσαι τὸν Πατέρα ἐν Χριστῷ, εἰάν μὴ τὸ Πνεῦμα πάντα ἐρευνᾷ, καὶ τὰ βάθη τῆς Θεῆς, πρότερον αἰνέσει καὶ ὑμῆσει τῇ νύ τὰ βάθη ἡρένηκε, καὶ ὡς ἐξίσχυσε κατέβληκεν. Origen. Περὶ εὐχής. Ed. Oxon. 1686.

^m Sonet psalmos (vel psalmus) convivium sobrium: Et ut tibi tenax memoria est, vox canora; aggredere hoc munus ex more. Cyprian. ad Donat. p. 10. Ed. Oxon. 1682.

ⁿ Ἐν ἀλλοῖς μὲν πολλοῖς ἀποδέχομαι καὶ αγαπῶ Νέπωλα, τῆς τε πίστεως καὶ τῆς φιλοπονίας καὶ τῆς ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς διατριβῆς, καὶ τῆς πολυ-

λῆς

I might go on to produce testimonies, proving psalmody to be in use in the churches in the times of Constantine, not far from the third century, which, as Eusebius, who was on the spot, relates^o, was performed with a very decent and agreeable modulation of the voice. As also, in the churches at Alexandria and Milan^r, when Athanasius was bishop of the one, and Ambrose of the other, who both lived in the fourth century. I might also observe, what spiritual delight and comfort the great Austin^a found in attending on this ordinance; but I chuse to go no further than the three first centuries, which were the purest and most incorrupt ages of Christianity.

Paulus Samosatenus, who denied the divinity of Christ, is the only person I have met with in this period of time, that objected to the psalms and songs sung in the churches, which he condemned as novel compositions^r; and yet provided women to sing in the church concerning himself: His reason for it seems to be, because the divinity of Christ was in an excellent manner set forth in the old songs and psalms; as appears from a passage in Eusebius, mentioned to confront Artemon and Theodotus, who had represented Christ's divinity as a novel doctrine. "The psalms and songs of the brethren, says Eusebius^s, which were written by the faithful, from the beginning, set forth the praises

λῆς ψαλμωδίας, ἣ μέχρι νῦν πολλοὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐνθυμῶνται. *Euseb.*
Eccl. Hist. l. 7. c. 24. p. 271.

^o Ib. l. 2. c. 17. p. 57. and l. 10. c. 3. p. 371.

^r *August.* Confess. l. 9. c. 6. §. 2. and 7. 1. and l. 10. c. 33. §. 2.

^a Ib. l. 9. c. 6. §. 2. and l. 10. c. 33. §. 3.

^r *Euseb.* Eccl. Hist. l. 7. c. 30. p. 281.

^s Ψαλμοὶ δὲ ὅσοι καὶ ὡδαὶ ἀδελφῶν ἀπαρχῆς (scribendum est ἀπαρχῆς) ἐπὶ πᾶσιν γραφεῖσθαι, τὸν λόγον τῷ Θεῷ τὸν Χριστὸν ὑμῶσι, θεολογῶντες. Ib. l. 5. c. 28. p. 196.

“ praises of Christ as the Word of God, ascribing
“ divinity to him.” From the whole it may
concluded, that this ordinance of singing of psalms
as it was used by Christ and his apostles, so it was
continued in the ages next to them; and though
it has been dragged through the sinks of popery
yet it ought not to be rejected on that account.
Had our reformers treated the ordinances of Christ
in such a manner; because they found them corrupted,
we should have had no ordinance now
being: Let us rather do all we can to clear this
every degree of superstition, and restore it to
native simplicity and spirituality.

F I N I S.



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